

**SARDAR DYAL SINGH**

**PUBLIC  
LIBRARY**

**NEW DELHI**



Class No. 824

Book No. B 814 L

Accession No. 986

**DYAL SINGH PUBLIC LIBRARY**

ROUSE AVENUE, NEW DELHI-1.

Cl. No. 824

Ac. No. 986

Date of release for loan

This book should be returned on or before the date last stamped below. An overdue charge of 0.6 P. will be charged for each - day the book is kept overtime.

---





*LITERATURE FOR OUR TIME*



# LITERATURE FOR OUR TIME

*An Anthology for College Freshmen*

*Edited by*

LEONARD S. BROWN

HARLOW O. WAITE

BENJAMIN P. ATKINSON

*Department of English, Syracuse University*



---

HENRY HOLT AND COMPANY · NEW YORK

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

## PREFACE

THIS COLLECTION of modern literature is designed to introduce the reader to some significant facts, ideas, and problems of the twentieth century as they appear in drama, the essay, poetry, the short story, and other media of expression. It is a way of showing the reader how literature and these various other forms can help him to understand his world.

The design of the book is centered on the chief problem of our time—the consequences to human society of the release of atomic energy. This achievement, awesome and frightening in itself, is an example of what man can do with scientific knowledge and technical proficiency. It also presents to us a new responsibility: to use this new-found energy to benefit mankind, not to blow it up.

The release of atomic energy has brought forth fresh problems concerning the relationship of man to himself, to the social order, and to the universe; it has also intensified the old questions in these connections. The problem of our time is how modern man can learn to live in harmony with his neighbors. He can more easily achieve that harmony if he understands his world, with all of its political, social, moral, ethical, and spiritual puzzles. This book shows him how some of the writers of our time have endeavored to solve the puzzles.

The book opens with the story of the atomic bomb, told through pictures and reports, and an introductory statement of its meaning to the world. Parts II and III present man in his machine world, the technological world which he has created and now is trying to control. His machines hold both a threat and a promise; they have been worshiped and ridiculed. They force him to re-examine his place in the universe. They also force him to re-examine his relationships with other people.

Parts IV and V deal with these relationships as they appear in political, economic, and racial conflicts between the conservative and liberal points of view. They also point out some of the international conflicts and the ways in which they have affected the viewpoint of several important writers.

Part VI begins with a series of selections in which writers comment on "How Writing Is Written" and how their work has been influenced by twentieth century events. They cast considerable light on the growth of a writer in our time and focus attention on the problem of the individual. Part VII

## *Preface*

follows the individual from childhood through the questionings of adolescence, the decisions that must be made by him in times of crisis and conflict, to final maturity and reflection. The next part emphasizes the necessity for the individual to face the modern world, underlines the dangers of his refusal to do so, and ends with a warning to those who would try to evade the issues.

Parts IX and X offer a variety of answers to the questions that have been raised in the book, stress the need for men to work in harmony under law, and re-state the dominant theme of the book, as expressed in Henry L. Stimson's words: "The focus of the problem does not lie in the atom; it resides in the hearts of men."

L. S. B.  
H. O. W.  
B. P. A.

*Syracuse University*  
*August 1, 1946*

# CONTENTS

## PART I: WHAT MATTERS NOW .

Prefatory note, 1

From President Truman's Fordham University speech, May 11, 1946, 2

"With his atom-busting cyclotron, Lawrence of California wins the Nobel prize in physics"—photograph and text from *Life*, 3

Equation for nuclear fission, 5

Nagasaki, Japan, under atomic bomb attack—photograph, 5

Nagasaki after atomic bombing—photograph, 6

Chinese baby, Shanghai—photograph, 6

Demetrios Capetanakis, statement on history, 6

Walt Whitman, "Years of the Modern," 7

U. S. War Department release on New Mexico test, July 16, 1945, 8

Henry L. Stimson, "The Bomb and the Opportunity," 13

## PART II: MACHINE AGAINST MAN

Prefatory note, 15

Franklin D. Roosevelt, excerpt from speech, 16

Alexander Pope, from "An Essay on Man," 16

Robinson Jeffers, from "Roan Stallion," 16

Oswald Spengler, "Technics" from *The Decline of the West*, 17

William Saroyan, "Mr. Mechano" from *The Human Comedy*, 22

Soviet women working in gas masks in a garment factory—photograph, 28

Aldous Huxley, "Education in the World State" from *Brave New World*, 28

Abner Dean, "The Bright Young Men"—drawing, 34-35

Jerry Robinson, "Atoman"—drawing, 36

Boris Artzybasheff, Humanized war machines—3 paintings, 37, 38

Karel Čapek, *R. U. R.*, 38

Charles Addams, "Sometimes I ask myself . . ."—drawing, 75

Sherwood Anderson, "Lift Up Thine Eyes," 75

John Dos Passos, "Proteus" from *USA*, 79

Kenneth Fearing, "No Credit," 81

## PART III: MAN AGAINST HIMSELF

Prefatory note, 83

Charles Sheeler, "Conversation—Earth and Sky"—painting, 84



## Contents

- George Boas, "In Defense of Machines," 85  
Lee Strout White, "Farewell, My Lovely!" 92  
Karl J. Shapiro, "Buick," 96  
Stephen Spender, "The Express," 97  
Stephen Spender, "The Landscape Near an Aerodrome," 98  
John Dos Passos, "The Campers at Kitty Hawk" from *U S A*, 99  
Robert Frost, "The Star-Splitter," 102  
James Thurber, "An Outline of Scientists" from *Let Your Mind Alone*, 105  
E. E. Cummings, "Space being . . . Curved," 107  
E. E. Cummings, "O sweet spontaneous," 108  
Robert Day, "Well, it looks like a buttercup to me."—drawing, 109  
Rube Goldberg, "Every Woman"—drawing, 110  
Edward Longstreth, "Mrs. Semplon's Fifth Freedom," 110  
"Rats are driven crazy by insoluble problems"—photographs and text from *Life*, 112  
"Boo!"—news story from *Time*, 114  
John Martinco, "Paris in panic"—news story, 115  
James Thurber, "The Day the Dam Broke" from *My Life and Hard Times*, 116  
"Notes and Comment"—*The New Yorker*, 120  
Archibald MacLeish, "You, Andrew Marvell," 121  
Archibald MacLeish, from "The Hamlet of A. MacLeish," 121  
Walter Lippmann, "The Problem of Unbelief" from *A Preface to Morals*, 123  
Aaron Bohrod, "Breton Village Cross"—painting, 132

## PART IV: TRADITION AND SOCIAL CHANGE

- Prefatory note, 133  
Charles A. Beard, "Whither Mankind?" from *Whither Mankind?* 134  
Albert Einstein and Raymond Swing, "Einstein on the Atomic Bomb," 141  
Sumner Welles, "The Atomic Bomb and World Government," 144  
Franklin D. Roosevelt, excerpt from speech, 150  
George Soule, "Change and the American Tradition" from *The Future of Liberty*,  
150  
W. H. Auden, "Get there if you can," 156  
E. A. Robinson, "The Mill," 158  
John Steinbeck, "Tractored Off" from *The Grapes of Wrath*, 158  
Dorothea Lange and Walker Evans, "Sharecroppers"—4 photographs, 163, 164, 165,  
166  
Robert McLaughlin, "A Short Wait Between Trains," 167  
"Race Riot"—3 photographs and legends from *Life*, 171, 172  
St. Clair McKelway, "The Touchin' Case of Mr. and Mrs. Massa," 172  
William Blake, "The Little Black Boy," 174

## Contents

- Ruth Benedict and Gene Weltfish, *The Races of Mankind*, 175  
James Truslow Adams, "Our Changing Characteristics" from *The Tempo of Modern Life*, 189  
Stuart Chase, "The Technological Imperative" from *The Economy of Abundance*, 198  
George E. Sokolsky, "A Conservative Speaks," 209  
Thomas Jefferson, "On Natural Aristocracy," 217  
Thomas Babington Macaulay, "Letter to a Correspondent in America," 220  
Mary Petty, "Has anybody ever thought of winning the Communists over to our way of life?"—drawing, 223

## PART V: THE INDIVIDUAL IN A WORLD SOCIETY

- Prefatory note, 225  
Carl L. Becker, "Can We Abolish Power Politics and End Imperialism?" from *How New Will the Better World Be?* 226  
Robinson Jeffers, "Shine, Perishing Republic," 241  
Robinson Jeffers, "The Purse-Seine," 242  
Robinson Jeffers, "The Answer," 243  
E. A. Robinson, "Cassandra," 244  
Stephen Spender, "Not palaces, an era's crown," 245  
W. H. Auden, "September 1, 1939," 245  
W. H. Auden, "Refugee Blues," 246  
Louis MacNeice, Parts III, VII, IX, XII, XV, and end of Part XXIV from *Autumn Journal*, 248  
Louis MacNeice, "Epilogue to Iceland," 258  
Selden Rodman, "V-Letter to Karl Shapiro in Australia," 259  
Karl J. Shapiro, "New Guinea Letter," 260  
Archibald MacLeish, "American Letter," 261  
Archibald MacLeish, "Men," 264  
Archibald MacLeish, "Speech to Those Who Say Comrade," 265  
Archibald MacLeish, *America Was Promises*, 266  
Robert Frost, "Two Tramps in Mud Time," 272  
Robert Frost, "Departmental," 274  
Carl Sandburg, Parts 28, 29, 30, 86, 105, 107 from *The People, Yes*, 274  
Eugene O'Neill, "*The Hairy Ape*," 283  
Katherine Anne Porter, "A Day's Work" from *The Leaning Tower and Other Stories*, 311

## Contents

### PART VI: HOW WRITING IS WRITTEN

Prefatory note, 325

Richard Wright, "How 'Bigger' Was Born," 326

Abner Dean, "Inspiration"—drawing, 334-335

George Gordon Byron, Canto III, Stanza VI from "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage," 336

S. I. Hayakawa, "Reports" from *Language in Action*, 336

Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch, "On Jargon" from *On the Art of Writing*, 341

A. E. Housman, from *The Name and Nature of Poetry*, 346

Louis MacNeice, "Foreword" to *Poems 1925-1940*, 347

Stephen Spender, from "Foreword" to *The Still Centre*, 348

Robinson Jeffers, from "Foreword" to *The Selected Poetry of Robinson Jeffers*, 348

William Saroyan, "Preface" to *The Daring Young Man on the Flying Trapeze*, 350

W. Somerset Maugham, "Writing Prose" from *The Summing Up*, 351

William McFee, "The Pattern-Makers" from *Swallowing the Anchor*, 361

Joseph Conrad, "Preface" to *Nigger of the Narcissus*, 370

Kenneth Burke, "Literature as Equipment for Living" from *The Philosophy of Literary Form*, 373

Gertrude Stein, "How Writing Is Written," 379

### PART VII: COMING-OF-AGE IN OUR TIME

Prefatory note, 387

William Shakespeare, from *As You Like It*, 388

E. E. Cummings, "in Just-spring," 388

Archibald MacLeish, "Eleven," 389

Thomas Wolfe, "The Lost Boy" from *The Hills Beyond*, 390

William Faulkner, "The Bear" from *Go Down, Moses*, 412

John Steinbeck, "The Red Pony," Part I, from *The Long Valley*, 422

Aldous Huxley, "Young Archimedes" from *Young Archimedes and Other Stories*, 440

James Joyce, "Araby" from *Dubliners*, 460

Sherwood Anderson, "Sophistication" from *Winesburg, Ohio*, 464

A. E. Housman, "When I was one-and-twenty," 470

A. E. Housman, "Reveille," 470

A. E. Housman, "Loveliest of trees, the cherry now," 470

Wilfred Owen, "The Seed," 471

Edmund Blunden, "Memoir of Wilfred Owen," 471

Wilfred Owen, "Preface to a Projected Volume of Poems," 477

Wilfred Owen, "Apologia pro poemate meo," 477

## Contents

- Wilfred Owen, "Anthem for Doomed Youth," 478  
 Wilfred Owen, "Greater Love," 479  
 Wilfred Owen, "Strange Meeting," 479  
 Wilfred Owen, "Dulce et Decorum Est," 480  
 Wilfred Owen, "Futility," 481  
 Stephen Spender, "Ultima Ratio Regum," 482  
 Karl J. Shapiro, "Elegy for a Dead Soldier," 482  
 A. E. Housman, "Soldier from the wars returning," 485  
 A. E. Housman, "The half-moon westers low, my love," 485  
 Archibald MacLeish, "Memorial Rain," 485  
 Luigi Pirandello, "War" from *The Medals and Other Stories*, 487  
 Bill Mauldin, "Up Front"—4 drawings, 490, 491, 492, 493  
 Frederick Lewis Allen, "Prelude: May, 1919" and "Back to Normalcy" from *Only Yesterday*, 494  
 Maxwell Anderson, *Winterset*, 506  
 W. H. Auden, from "Letter to Lord Byron," Part IV, 555  
 Kenneth Fearing, "Portrait (2)," 560  
 E. A. Robinson, "Flammonde," 561  
 John Steinbeck, "The Harness" from *The Long Valley*, 563  
 James Thurber, "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty" from *My World—and Welcome to It*, 571  
 James Thurber, "Home"—drawing, 575  
 John Steinbeck, excerpt from a letter, 576  
 John Masefield, "On Growing Old," 576  
 E. A. Robinson, "Mr. Flood's Party," 577  
 Alfred Tennyson, "Ulysses," 578  
 William Wordsworth, from "Ode: Intimations of Immortality," 579  
 T. S. Eliot, "Animula," 580  
 Vachel Lindsay, "The Leaden-Eyed," 580  
 F. Scott Fitzgerald, letter to his daughter, 581  
 William Butler Yeats, "A Prayer for My Daughter," 582  
 Carl Sandburg, Part 9 from *The People, Yes*, 583  
 Kenneth Fearing, "Any Man's Advice to His Son," 584  
 William James, "The Moral Equivalent of War" from *Memories and Studies*, 585

## PART VIII: TWENTIETH CENTURY BLUES

- Prefatory note, 595  
 Noel Coward, chorus from "Twentieth Century Blues," 596  
 Irving Mills and Mitchell Parish, lyric for Duke Ellington's "Sophisticated Lady," 596

## Contents

- Philip Barry, *The Philadelphia Story*, 597  
T. S. Eliot, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," 647  
Mary Petty, "Promise you'll wait for me. I want something real to come back to."—drawing, 651  
T. S. Eliot, "Portrait of a Lady," 652  
T. S. Eliot, "The Hollow Men," 654  
W. H. Auden, "Casino," 656  
S. N. Behrman, *Biography*, 657  
Joseph Mitchell, "Professor Sea Gull" from *McSorley's Wonderful Saloon*, 708  
Kenneth Fearing, "American Rhapsody (4)," 720  
Kenneth Fearing, "Readings, Forecasts, Personal Guidance," 721  
Kenneth Fearing, "Devil's Dream," 723  
Michael Lenson, "Bikini"—study for painting, 724  
Archibald MacLeish, *The Fall of the City*, 725  
Archibald MacLeish, "Epistle to be Left in the Earth," 738  
E. M. Forster, "The Machine Stops" from *The Eternal Moment*, 739

## PART IX: CREDOS FOR TODAY

- Prefatory note, 761  
Abner Dean, "Return to Normal"—drawing, 762  
Kenneth Fearing, "Travelogue in a Shooting-Gallery," 763  
Kenneth Fearing, "Reception Good," 764  
E. E. Cummings, "nobody loses all the time," 765  
E. E. Cummings, "If you can't eat you got to," 766  
E. E. Cummings, "since feeling is first," 766  
E. E. Cummings, "anyone lived in a pretty how town," 766  
E. E. Cummings, "these children singing," 767  
E. E. Cummings, "love is more thicker," 768  
W. H. Auden, "Law Like Love," 768  
A. E. Housman, "The laws of God, the laws of man," 769  
A. E. Housman, "The chestnut casts his flambeaux," 769  
A. E. Housman, "'Terence, this is stupid stuff,'" 770  
E. A. Robinson, from "Captain Craig," 771  
Robert Frost, "To a Thinker," 772  
Robert Frost, "The Vantage Point," 773  
Robert Frost, "A Drumlin Woodchuck," 774  
Robert Frost, "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening," 774  
Robert Frost, "Neither Out Far Nor In Deep," 775  
Robert Frost, "Mending Wall," 775  
Robert Frost, "There are Roughly Zones," 776

## Contents

- Robert Frost, "Acquainted With the Night," 777  
Walter Millis, "The Faith of an American" from *Zero Hour*, 777  
Percy Bysshe Shelley, "Political Greatness," 792  
Joseph Conrad, "The Secret Sharer" from *'Twixt Land and Sea*, 793  
Carl Sandburg, Part 57 from *The People, Yes*, 820  
Stephen Spender, "I think continually of those who were truly great," 824  
Thomas Wolfe, "The Promise of America" from *You Can't Go Home Again*, 824  
Thomas Wolfe, "Credo" from *You Can't Go Home Again*, 829  
"Sixteen-horse combine"—photograph, 830  
"Mid-town Manhattan"—photograph, 831  
Norman Corwin, "We Hold These Truths" from *More by Corwin*, 833  
Archibald MacLeish, "Geography of This Time," 851

## PART X: MANIFESTOES FOR TOMORROW

- Prefatory note, 853  
Matthew Arnold, "Dover Beach," 854  
José Ortega y Gasset, "The Primitive and the Technical" from *The Revolt of the Masses*, 854  
Morris R. Cohen, "The Future of American Liberalism" from *The Faith of a Liberal*, 860  
Norman Cousins, "Modern Man Is Obsolete," 881  
Walter Lippmann, "The Moralist in an Unbelieving World" from *A Preface to Morals*, 889  
Philip Wylie, "Democracy" from *Generation of Vipers*, 897  
Emery Reves, "A Copernican World," "Fallacy of Self-determination of Nations" and part of "Law . . . Conquest" from *The Anatomy of Peace*, 902

## APPENDICES

- Some Modern Novels, 929  
Recordings of Poems by the Poets, 930  
Distribution of Selections by Types, 931  
Biographical Notes, 936



## PART I · WHAT MATTERS NOW . . .

THE SOURCE, appearance, and effect of the human problem posed by the whole of this volume are all suggested in Part I. President Truman, in his speech at Fordham University, gave the cue: teachers and students today must combine their talents to learn all there is to know about the atomic world in which they live so that they may face its chief problem without fear or vacillation. Lawrence's cyclotron, which dramatized for the public a brave new world, is part of the problem, as are all the modern inventions which have taken us out of nature's hands and have put nature not only in our hands to do with as we please, but on our hands to worry us with new dangers. The innocent-seeming equation which follows, a scientist's poem, is the intellectual core of the huge mushrooming cloud pictured on page 5. The destruction which remained when the cloud had drifted away, and the lonely child who sits in the midst of war bring us back to the human world, and history now becomes a matter of immediate concern. We see that a magnificent spectacle and an impersonal abstraction have their ultimate significance only in terms of human individuals. The selfless and disinterested fascination with which we may watch an experiment on the New Mexico desert must, we realize, be matched with an awareness like Henry L. Stimson's, that what we have done and what will become of us are still our responsibility. The contrast between machine and child, between formula and a dead city, is only an apparent one, for what can bring them together lies in the hearts and imaginations of men.



*from* PRESIDENT TRUMAN'S FORDHAM  
UNIVERSITY SPEECH, MAY 11, 1946

THERE IS profound truth in the first line of the new charter of the United Nations educational, scientific and cultural organization. The Charter declares: "Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed."

I fear we are too much concerned with material things to remember that our real strength lies in spiritual values. I doubt whether there is in this troubled world today, when nations are divided by jealousy and suspicion, a single problem that could not be solved if approached in the spirit of the Sermon on the Mount.

The new age of atomic energy presses upon us. Mark that well! What may have been sufficient yesterday is not sufficient today. New and terrible urgencies, new and terrible responsibilities, have been placed upon education.

Ignorance and its handmaidens, prejudice, intolerance, suspicion of our fellow-men, breed dictators. And they breed wars. Civilization cannot survive an atomic war. Nothing would be left but a world reduced to rubble. Gone would be man's hope for decency. Gone would be our hope for the greatest age in the history of mankind—an age which you and I know can harness atomic energy for the welfare of man and not for his destruction.

And so we must look to education in the long run to wipe out that ignorance which threatens catastrophe. Intelligent men do not hate other men just because their religion may be different, or because their habits and language may be different, or because their national origin or color may be different. It is up to education to bring

about that deeper international understanding which is so vital to world peace.

Intelligent Americans no longer think that merely because a man is born outside the boundaries of the United States, he is no concern of ours. They know that in such thinking lie the seeds of dictatorship and tyranny. And they know from sad experience that dictatorship and tyranny are too ruthless to stop at the borders of the United States and conveniently leave us alone. They know what World War II and the atomic bomb have taught them—that we must work and live with all our fellow-men if we are to work and live at all. They know that those without economic hope, and those to whom education has been forcibly denied, willingly turn to dictators. They know that in a nation where teachers are free to teach, and young men and women are free to learn, there is a strong bulwark against dictatorship.

That was the last message from President Roosevelt. In a speech which he wrote just before he died, but which he never delivered, he said:

"We are faced with the pre-eminent fact that, if civilization is to survive, we must cultivate the science of human relationships—the ability of all peoples, of all kinds, to live and work together, in the same world, at peace."

Until citizens of America and citizens of the other nations of the world learn this "science of human relationships" of which President Roosevelt spoke, the atomic bomb will remain a frightful weapon which threatens to destroy us all.

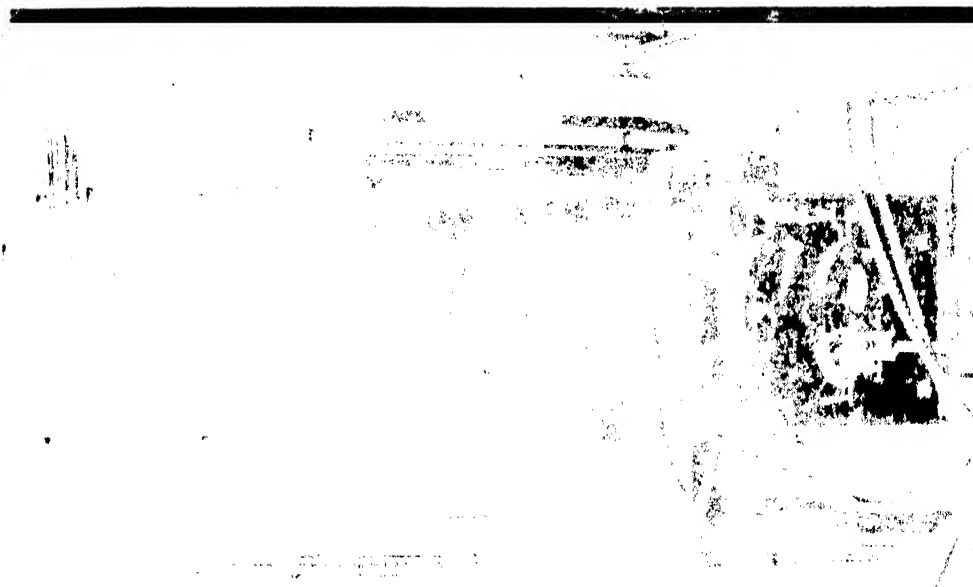
But there is at least one defense against this bomb. That defense lies in our mas-

## *Lawrence of California Wins the Nobel Prize in Physics*

tering this science of human relationships all over the world. It is the defense of tolerance and of understanding, of intelligence and thoughtfulness.

When we have learned these things, we shall be able to prove that Hiroshima was not the end of civilization, but the beginning of a new and better world.

### WITH HIS ATOM-BUSTING CYCLOTRON, LAWRENCE OF CALIFORNIA WINS THE NOBEL PRIZE IN PHYSICS



*Copyrighted. By permission of Life*

The beam of light is air ionized by fusillade of subatomic bullets from cyclotron at right. Though the beam itself is not very hot, it would burn your hand to a crisp in an instant or explode water into superheated steam. To protect operators, cyclotron is enclosed in thick water jackets.

IN A BIG BUILDING on the University of California campus at Berkeley stands an enormous Rube Goldberg contraption of steel, copper and aluminum, the biggest cyclotron in the world. It weighs 220 tons and is used to study one of the tiniest units of the physical world, the nucleus of the atom.

The cyclotron was invented by California's Dr. Ernest Orlando Lawrence. For its invention and for the work he did with an earlier 60-ton machine, Dr. Lawrence was last fall awarded the Nobel Prize in physics. Not content with his present apparatus, he now hopes for a 4,000-ton cyclotron.

*Life*, Feb. 5, 1940. Reprinted by permission.

The photograph (page 3), taken in November [1939] after an earlier picture had gone down with the *Athenia*, shows the business end of the cyclotron. A beam of ions shooting from the target window at right center has knocked electrons from air atoms in its path. The purple glow like a neon sign is caused by electrons re-joining atoms. The operation of the cyclotron is completely silent, but the ion beam is so powerful that it will vaporize metal in a few seconds. In research' experiments, water-cooled targets of beryllium or other substances are clamped directly in front of the target window.

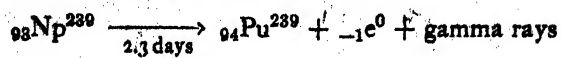
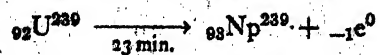
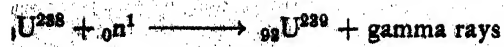
The concept of the atom's structure is constantly being revised as new discoveries are made, but for the purposes of description a scientist will paint an allegorical picture like this. If you could magnify an atom 30,000,000,000,000 times, you would have an object about 10 miles in diameter, composed of several concentric rings of electrons around a central nucleus. The electrons would be about the size of hazelnuts and would be negatively charged. The outer rings of electrons are extremely light and almost the entire mass of the atom is concentrated in the nucleus. The nucleus itself would be about the size of a tennis ball, made up of two kinds of particles called protons and neutrons. The number of each depends upon the substance. The protons have a positive electrical charge, while the neutrons have none.

"Splitting the atom," a favorite dream of the Sunday supplements, has been an accomplished fact for 45 years. What physicists are after today is a different and more difficult kind of atom-splitting,

knocking the nucleus itself apart, since all but a fraction of a percent of the world's supply of energy is locked inside.

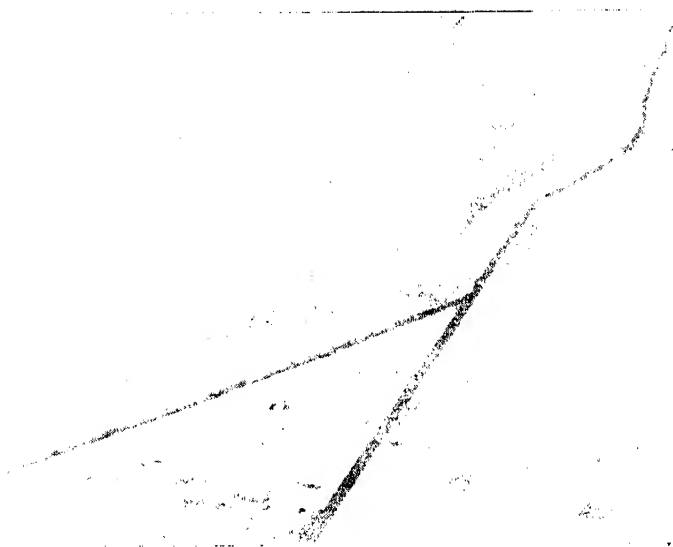
The cyclotron is the latest and best tool for generating the huge amounts of energy needed to attack the nucleus. Fundamentally it is nothing but a radio transmitter and a magnet. The transmitter, which generates oscillating electric power, increases the speed of particles, usually ions of heavy hydrogen, in its field by giving them intermittent electrical pushes, as a boy hits a hoop to make it roll faster. The magnet holds them in a flat spiral path as they travel outward until they hit the target. Particles speeded up like this form a beam like that shown in the photograph (page 3). When this beam is directed against a metal target, enough of the particles hit the nuclei in the metal to cause atomic explosions, make them give off neutrons or other radiations. When other substances, in turn, are bombarded with neutrons, new substances are formed, which explode with radioactive violence. These artificially radioactive substances are of great use in biological research.

The Radiation Laboratory at Berkeley is currently a University showpiece. Last fall the *Pelican*, U. of C.'s funny paper, ran the drawing showing a badly busted cyclotron where operator remarks: "Toughest damn atom I ever saw!" Meanwhile Dr. Lawrence breaks and builds his atoms and, with his brother, experiments on the possibilities of cyclotron cancer treatment. And meanwhile, in spite of heavy water jackets and other precautions, there is a gentle rain of neutrons on the Berkeley campus.



Nagasaki, Japan, under atomic bomb attack

*U. S. Army A.A.F. photo*



Nagasaki after atomic bombing

*U. S. Army A.A.F. photo*



Chinese baby, Shanghai

*International News Photo*

What matters is not history as history, but human beings.  
... What now matters is humanity and what will become of it.

—DEMETRIOS CAPEANAKIS in *Heart of Europe*, p. 285

## YEARS OF THE MODERN

by WALT WHITMAN

Years of the modern! years of the unperform'd!  
Your horizon rises, I see it parting away for more august dramas,  
I see not America only, not only Liberty's nation but other nations preparing,  
I see tremendous entrances and exits, new combinations, the solidarity of races,  
I see that force advancing with irresistible power on the world's stage,  
(Have the old forces, the old wars, played their parts? are the acts suitable to them  
closed?)  
I see Freedom, completely arm'd and victorious and very haughty, with Law on  
one side and Peace on the other,  
A stupendous trio all issuing forth against the idea of caste;  
What historic denouements are these we so rapidly approach?  
I see men marching and countermarching by swift millions,  
I see the frontiers and boundaries of the old aristocracies broken,  
I see the landmarks of European kings removed,  
I see this day the People beginning their landmarks, (all others give way);  
Never were such sharp questions ask'd as this day,  
Never was average man, his soul, more energetic, more like a God,  
Lo, how he urges and urges, leaving the masses no rest!  
His daring foot is on land and sea everywhere, he colonizes the Pacific, the archi-  
pelagoes,  
With the steamship, the electric telegraph, the newspaper, the wholesale engines  
of war,  
With these and the world-spreading factories he interlinks all geography, all lands;  
What whispers are these O lands, running ahead of you, passing under the seas?  
Are all nations communing? is there going to be but one heart to the globe?  
Is humanity forming en-masse? for lo, tyrants tremble, crowns grow dim,  
The earth, restive, confronts a new era, perhaps a general divine war,  
No one knows what will happen next, such portents fill the days and nights;  
Years prophetic! the space ahead as I walk, as I vainly try to pierce it, is full of  
phantoms,  
Unborn deeds, things soon to be, project their shapes around me,  
This incredible rush and heat, this strange ecstatic fever of dreams O years!  
Your dreams O years, how they penetrate through me! (I know not whether I  
sleep or wake;)  
The perform'd America and Europe grow dim, retiring in shadow behind me,  
The unperform'd, more gigantic than ever, advance, advance, upon me.

From *Leaves of Grass* by Walt Whitman. With permission from Doubleday and Company, Inc.

## UNITED STATES WAR DEPARTMENT RELEASE ON NEW MEXICO TEST, JULY 16, 1945

MANKIND'S SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION to a new age, the Atomic Age, was ushered in July 16, 1945, before the eyes of a tense group of renowned scientists and military men gathered in the desertlands of New Mexico to witness the first end results of their \$2,000,000,000 effort. Here in a remote section of the Alamogordo Air Base 120 miles southeast of Albuquerque the first man-made atomic explosion, the outstanding achievement of nuclear science, was achieved at 5:30 A.M. of that day. Darkening heavens, pouring forth rain and lightning immediately up to the zero hour, heightened the drama.

Mounted on a steel tower, a revolutionary weapon destined to change war as we know it, or which may even be the instrumentality to end all wars, was set off with an impact which signalized man's entrance into a new physical world. Success was greater than the most ambitious estimates. A small amount of matter, the product of a chain of huge specially constructed industrial plants, was made to release the energy of the universe locked up within the atom from the beginning of time. A fabulous achievement had been reached. Speculative theory, barely established in pre-war laboratories, had been projected into practicality.

This phase of the Atomic Bomb Project, which is headed by Major General Leslie R. Groves, was under the direction of Dr. J. R. Oppenheimer, theoretical physicist of the University of California. He is to be credited with achieving the implementation of atomic energy for military purposes.

Tension before the actual detonation was at a tremendous pitch. Failure was

an ever-present possibility. Too great a success, envisioned by some of those present, might have meant an uncontrollable, unusable weapon.

Final assembly of the atomic bomb began on the night of July 12 in an old ranch house. As various component assemblies arrived from distant points, tension among the scientists rose to an increasing pitch. Coolest of all was the man charged with the actual assembly of the vital core, Dr. R. F. Bacher, in normal times a professor at Cornell University.

The entire cost of the project, representing the erection of whole cities and radically new plants spread over many miles of countryside, plus unprecedented experimentation, was represented in the pilot bomb and its parts. Here was the focal point of the venture. No other country in the world had been capable of such an outlay in brains and technical effort.

The full significance of these closing moments before the final factual test was *not* lost on these men of science. They fully knew their position as pioneers into another age. They also knew that one false move would blast them and their entire effort into eternity. Before the assembly started a receipt for the vital matter was signed by Brigadier General Thomas F. Farrell, General Groves' deputy. This signalized the formal transfer of the irreplaceable material from the scientists to the Army.

During final preliminary assembly, a bad few minutes developed when the assembly of an important section of the bomb was delayed. The entire unit was machine-tooled to the finest measurement. The insertion was partially completed

*United States War Department Release on New Mexico Test, July 16, 1945*

when it apparently wedged tightly and would go no farther. Dr. Bacher, however, was undismayed and reassured the group that time would solve the problem. In three minutes' time, Dr. Bacher's statement was verified and basic assembly was completed without further incident.

Specialty teams, comprised of the top men on specific phases of science, all of which were bound up in the whole, took over their specialized parts of the assembly. In each group was centralized months and even years of channelized endeavor.

On Saturday, July 14, the unit which was to determine the success or failure of the entire project was elevated to the top of the steel tower. All that day and the next, the job of preparation went on. In addition to the apparatus necessary to cause the detonation, complete instrumentation to determine the pulse beat and all reactions of the bomb was rigged on the tower.

The ominous weather which had dogged the assembly of the bomb had a very sobering effect on the assembled experts whose work was accomplished amid lightning flashes and peals of thunder. The weather, unusual and upsetting, blocked out aerial observation of the test. It even held up the actual explosion scheduled at 4:00 A.M. for an hour and a half. For many months the approximate date and time had been set and had been one of the high-level secrets of the best kept secret of the entire war.

Nearest observation point was set up 10,000 yards south of the tower where in a timber and earth shelter the controls for the test were located. At a point 17,000 yards from the tower at a point which would give the best observation the key figures in the atomic bomb project took their posts. These included General

Groves, Dr. Vannevar Bush, head of the Office of Scientific Research and Development and Dr. James B. Conant, president of Harvard University.

Actual detonation was in charge of Dr. K. T. Bainbridge of Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He and Lieutenant Bush, in charge of the Military Police Detachment, were the last men to inspect the tower with its cosmic bomb.

At three o'clock in the morning the party moved forward to the control station. General Groves and Dr. Oppenheimer consulted with the weathermen. The decision was made to go ahead with the test despite the lack of assurance of favorable weather. The time was set for 5:30 A.M.

General Groves rejoined Dr. Conant and Dr. Bush, and just before the test time they joined the many scientists gathered at the Base Camp. Here all present were ordered to lie on the ground, face downward, heads away from the blast direction.

Tension reached a tremendous pitch in the control room as the deadline approached. The several observation points in the area were tied in to the control room by radio and with twenty minutes to go, Dr. S. K. Allison of Chicago University took over the radio net and made periodic time announcements.

The time signals, "minus 20 minutes, minus fifteen minutes," and on and on increased the tension to the breaking point as the group in the control room which included Dr. Oppenheimer and General Farrell held their breaths, all praying with the intensity of the moment which will live forever with each man who was there. At "minus 45 seconds," robot mechanism took over and from that point on the



## *What Matters Now . . .*

whole great complicated mass of intricate mechanism was in operation without human control. Stationed at a reserve switch, however, was a soldier scientist ready to attempt to stop the explosion should the order be issued. The order never came.

At the appointed time there was a blinding flash lighting up the whole area brighter than the brightest daylight. A mountain range three miles from the observation point stood out in bold relief. Then came a tremendous sustained roar and a heavy pressure wave which knocked down two men outside the control center. Immediately thereafter, a huge multi-colored surging cloud boiled to an altitude of over 40,000 feet. Clouds in its path disappeared. Soon the shifting stratosphere winds dispersed the now gray mass.

The test was over, the project a success.

The steel tower had been entirely vaporized. Where the tower had stood, there was a huge sloping crater. Dazed but relieved at the success of their tests, the scientists promptly marshaled their forces to estimate the strength of America's new weapon. To examine the nature of the crater, specially equipped tanks were wheeled into the area, one of which carried Dr. Enrico Fermi, noted nuclear scientist. Answer to their findings rests in the destruction effected in Japan today in the first military use of the atomic bomb.

Had it not been for the desolated area where the test was held and for the cooperation of the press in the area, it is certain that the test itself would have attracted far-reaching attention. As it was, many people in that area are still discussing the effect of the smash. A significant aspect, recorded by the press, was the experience of a blind girl near Albuquerque many miles from the scene, who, when

the flash of the test lighted the sky before the explosion could be heard, exclaimed, "What was that?"

Interviews of General Groves and General Farrell give the following on-the-scene versions of the test. General Groves said: "My impressions of the night's high points follow: After about an hour's sleep I got up at 0100 and from that time on until about five I was with Dr. Oppenheimer constantly. Naturally he was tense, although his mind was working at its usual extraordinary efficiency. I attempted to shield him from the evident concern shown by many of his assistants who were disturbed by the uncertain weather conditions. By 0330 we decided that we could probably fire at 0530. By 0400 the rain had stopped but the sky was heavily overcast. Our decision became firmer as time went on.

"During most of these hours the two of us journeyed from the control house out into the darkness to look at the stars and to assure each other that the one or two visible stars were becoming brighter. At 0510 I left Dr. Oppenheimer and returned to the main observation point which was 17,000 yards from the point of explosion. In accordance with our orders I found all personnel not otherwise occupied massed on a bit of high ground.

"Two minutes before the scheduled firing time, all persons lay face down with their feet pointing towards the explosion. As the remaining time was called from the loud speaker from the 10,000-yard control station there was complete awesome silence. Dr. Conant said he had never imagined seconds could be so long. Most of the individuals in accordance with orders shielded their eyes in one way or another

*United States War Department Release on New Mexico Test, July 16, 1945*

"First came the burst of light of a brilliance beyond any comparison. We all rolled over and looked through dark glasses at the ball of fire. About forty seconds later came the shock wave followed by the sound, neither of which seemed startling after our complete astonishment at the extraordinary lighting intensity.

"A massive cloud was formed which surged and billowed upward with tremendous power, reaching the stratosphere in about five minutes.

"Two supplementary explosions of minor effect other than the lighting occurred in the cloud shortly after the main explosion.

"The cloud traveled to a great height first in the form of a ball, then mushroomed, then changed into a long trailing chimney-shaped column and finally was sent in several directions by the variable winds at the different elevations.

"Dr. Conant reached over and we shook hands in mutual congratulations. Dr. Bush, who was on the other side of me, did likewise. The feeling of the entire assembly, even the uninitiated, was of profound awe. Drs. Conant and Bush and myself were struck by an even stronger feeling that the faith of those who had been responsible for the initiation and the carrying on of this Herculean project had been justified."

General Farrell's impressions are: "The scene inside the shelter was dramatic beyond words. In and around the shelter were some twenty-odd people concerned with last-minute arrangements. Included were Dr. Oppenheimer, the Director who had borne the great scientific burden of developing the weapon from the raw materials made in Tennessee and Washington, and a dozen of his key assistants, Dr.

Kistiakowsky, Dr. Bainbridge, who supervised all the detailed arrangements for the test; the weather expert, and several others. Besides those, there were a handful of soldiers, two or three Army officers and one Naval officer. The shelter was filled with a great variety of instruments and radios.

"For some hectic two hours preceding the blast, General Groves stayed with the Director. Twenty minutes before the zero hour, General Groves left for his station at the base camp, first, because it provided a better observation point and, second, because of our rule that he and I must not be together in situations where there is an element of danger which existed at both points.

"Just after General Groves left, announcements began to be broadcast of the interval remaining before the blast to the other groups participating in and observing the test. As the time interval grew smaller and changed from minutes to seconds, the tension increased by leaps and bounds. Everyone in that room knew the awful potentialities of the thing that they thought was about to happen. The scientists felt that their figuring must be right and that the bomb had to go off but there was in everyone's mind a strong measure of doubt.

"We were reaching into the unknown and we did not know what might come of it. It can safely be said that most of those present were praying—and praying harder than they had ever prayed before. If the shot were successful, it was a justification of the several years of intensive effort of tens of thousands of people—statesmen, scientists, engineers, manufacturers, soldiers, and many others in every walk of life.

"In that brief instant in the remote New Mexico desert, the tremendous effort of the brains and brawn of all these people came suddenly and startlingly to the fullest fruition. Dr. Oppenheimer, on whom had rested a very heavy burden, grew tenser as the last seconds ticked off. He scarcely breathed. He held on to a post to steady himself. For the last few seconds, he stared directly ahead and then when the announcer shouted 'Now!' and there came this tremendous burst of light followed shortly thereafter by the deep growling roar of the explosion, his face relaxed into an expression of tremendous relief. Several of the observers standing back of the shelter to watch the lighting effects were knocked flat by the blast.

"The tension in the room let up and all started congratulating each other. Everyone sensed 'This is it!' No matter what might happen now all knew that the impossible scientific job had been done. Atomic fission would no longer be hidden in the cloisters of the theoretical physicists' dreams. It was almost full grown at birth. It was a great new force to be used for good or for evil. There was a feeling in that shelter that those concerned with its nativity should dedicate their lives to the mission that it would always be used for good and never for evil.

"Dr. Kistiakowsky threw his arms around Dr. Oppenheimer and embraced him with shouts of glee. Others were equally enthusiastic. All the pent-up emotions were released in those few minutes and all seemed to sense immediately that the explosion had far exceeded the most optimistic expectations and wildest hopes of the scientists. All seemed to feel that they had been present at the birth of a new age—The Age of Atomic Energy—

and felt their profound responsibility to help in guiding into right channels the tremendous forces which had been unlocked for the first time in history.

"As to the present war, there was a feeling that no matter what else might happen, we now had the means to insure its speedy conclusion and save thousands of American lives. As to the future, there had been brought into being something big and something new that would prove to be immeasurably more important than the discovery of electricity or any of the other great discoveries which have so affected our existence.

"The effects could well be called unprecedented, magnificent, beautiful, stupendous and terrifying. No man-made phenomenon of such tremendous power had ever occurred before. The lighting effects beggared description. The whole country was lighted by a searing light with the intensity many times that of the midday sun. It was golden, purple, violet, gray and blue. It lighted every peak, crevasse and ridge of the near-by mountain range with a clarity and beauty that cannot be described but must be seen to be imagined. It was that beauty the great poets dream about but describe most poorly and inadequately. Thirty seconds after, the explosion came first, the air blast pressing hard against the people and things, to be followed almost immediately by the strong, sustained, awesome roar which warned of doomsday and made us feel that we puny things were blasphemous to dare tamper with the forces heretofore reserved to the Almighty. Words are inadequate tools for the job of acquainting those not present with the physical, mental and psychological effects. It had to be witnessed to be realized."

# THE BOMB AND THE OPPORTUNITY

by HENRY L. STIMSON

THE ADVENT of the atomic bomb has created a profound impression in all quarters of the globe. Bidden or unbidden, the atomic bomb sits in on all the councils of nations; in its light all other problems of international relations are dwarfed. This is so not because these other problems are no longer important in themselves, but because the question of the control of the atomic bomb towers above all else. No other problem has been so constantly in my thoughts as this one.

If the atomic bomb were merely another—though more devastating—military weapon, which could be assimilated into the customary pattern of international relations, conceivably we could then follow the old pattern of secrecy and sole reliance upon national military superiority, and depend upon international caution to stay the future use of the weapon. But, to my view, the recent unlocking of atomic energy constitutes a first step—and only a first step—in a new control by man over the primal forces of nature too revolutionary and dangerous to fit into the old patterns. The military application of this discovery underscores most sharply the divergence between man's growing technical power for destructiveness and his psychological power of self-control and group control—his moral power. If this is so, how this problem is approached in the sphere of the relations among the nations is a question of the most vital importance in the evolution of human progress.

The chief lesson I have learned in a long life is that the only way to make a

man trustworthy is to trust him; and the surest way to make him untrustworthy is to distrust him and show your distrust. And it is from this lesson that I draw the conviction that only a direct and open dealing with other nations on this, the most pressing problem of our time, can bring us enduring co-operation and an effective community of purpose among the nations of the earth. It is the first step on the path of unreserved co-operation among nations which is the most important. Once the course of national conviction and action is set in this direction by the example of the major powers of the world, petty differences will be recognized for what they are, and the way toward a real fraternity of nations will be open.

We must not delay. The poisons of the past are persistent and cannot be purged by timid treatment. By its sole possession of the bomb, at least for the present, the United States finds itself in a position of world leadership. But this solitary possession is most certainly very transient. It must recognize this and act swiftly. It must take the lead by holding out an open hand to other nations in a spirit of genuine trust and with a real desire for a thoroughgoing co-operative effort in meeting and solving this problem. Truly this is a time for greatness of heart and of purpose, and unless we demonstrate these qualities now other nations cannot be expected to do so.

The development of atomic energy holds great, but as yet unexploited, promise for the well-being of civilization.

Henry L. Stimson, "The Bomb and the Opportunity," *Harper's Magazine*, March, 1946. Reprinted by permission of Mr. Henry L. Stimson.

### *What Matters Now . . .*

Whether this promise will be realized depends on whether the danger of swift and unprecedented destruction can be removed from the earth. Whether it is removed depends on whether we and other nations move firmly, quickly, and with frank transparency of purpose toward the goal of uniting all men of good will against the appalling threat to man's very existence. The focus of the problem does not lie in the atom; it resides in the hearts of men.

## PART II · MACHINE AGAINST MAN

**I**F THE PROBLEM of our time lies in the hearts of men, a step toward its solution will be made when we surmount our fears and ask what man is like. Is he, this "glory, jest, and riddle," weak before awful nature, as Jeffers believes? Has he no choice but to accept his fate in a historically determined technological world? A Spengler may say yes, but the boy who is attracted to Mr. Mechano in Saroyan's story reminds us that what is now fear began as fascination. Some hunger in us leads us to invent machines and to slave over them in a manner emphasizing our robot-like kinship with them. We are so sure that the machines are useful for our present needs, they are so tame to look at and so easy to master, that we forget what ultimate use we made them for and accept what they do to us.

How ridiculous, we keep on telling ourselves, is this mechanical age! We wonder, uneasily at times, what is missing from the glittering future of mass production methods that Huxley projects for us, in which even education has adopted the efficiency of the assembly line. Whatever it is, the "bright young men," with a passion for gadgets and tinkering, have fun, the machines can easily be made to look human at least, and the children can equip their everyday heroes in the comic strips with the forces that echo in the headlines on the first page. According to a recent commentator, the two fundamental rights in a technological age are the right to be amused and the right to consume; they are after all fulfilled by these same machines. So why be afraid?

We are safe, that is, until the moment when we discover that we have other rights, other desires. The whole world may crash in *R.U.R.*, but the robots who inherit the new world are different from the old robots; they possess curiosity, know love, and sense some of the beauties around them. The world is theirs.

The world might be ours, too, if we do more than merely "wonder" where it all will end, if we examine our pride, our desire for control, and the quality of our leisure. Domin and his associates, the makers of robots in Čapek's play, are not unknown to us, even in ourselves. They made their world; we can make our world, and perhaps we can even avoid the kind of world in which Anderson's factory-workers go crazy, in which mathematicians are dismissed as impractical though they have the powers of Proteus, and in which the only one who can know content is Steve the Robot.

*"... let me assert my firm belief that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself—nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror which paralyzes needed efforts to convert retreat into advance."*

—FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT, March 4, 1933

*from* AN ESSAY ON MAN

*by* ALEXANDER POPE

Know then thyself, presume not God to scan;  
The proper study of Mankind is Man.  
Placed on this isthmus of a middle state,  
A Being darkly wise, and rudely great:  
With too much knowledge for the Sceptic side,  
With too much weakness for the Stoic's pride,  
He hangs between; in doubt to act, or rest;  
In doubt to deem himself a God, or Beast;  
In doubt his Mind or Body to prefer;  
Born but to die, and reas'ning but to err;  
Alike in ignorance, his reason such,  
Whether he thinks too little, or too much:  
Chaos of Thought and Passion, all confused;  
Still by himself abused, or disabused;  
Created half to rise, and half to fall;  
Great lord of all things, yet a prey to all;  
Sole judge of Truth, in endless Error hurled:  
The glory, jest, and riddle of the world!

*from* ROAN STALLION

*by* ROBINSON JEFFERS

Humanity is  
the start of the race; I say  
Humanity is the mould to break away from, the crust to break  
through, the coal to break into fire,  
The atom to be spilt.  
Tragedy that breaks man's face and a white  
fire flies out of it; vision that fools him

From *The Selected Poetry of Robinson Jeffers*. Copyright, 1937, by Robinson Jeffers. Reprinted by permission of Random House, Inc.

## Technics

Out of his limits, desire that fools him out of his limits,  
unnatural crime, inhuman science,  
Slit eyes in the mask; wild loves that leap over the walls of  
nature, the wild fence-vaulter science,  
Useless intelligence of far stars, dim knowledge of the spinning  
demons that make an atom,  
These break, these pierce, these deify, praising their God  
shrilly with fierce voices: not in a man's shape  
He approves the praise, he that walks lightning-naked on the  
Pacific, that laces the sun with planets,  
The heart of the atom with electrons: what is humanity in this  
cosmos? For him, the last  
Least taint of a trace in the dregs of the solution; for itself,  
the mould to break away from, the coal  
To break into fire, the atom to be split.

## TECHNICS

by OSWALD SPENGLER

NOT ONLY primitive man and the child, but also the higher animals spontaneously evolve from the small everyday experiences an image of Nature which contains the sum of technical indications observed as recurrent. The eagle "knows" the moment at which to swoop down on the prey; the singing-bird sitting on the eggs "knows" the approach of the marten; the deer "finds" the place where there is food. In man, this experience of all the senses has narrowed and deepened itself into experience of the eye. But, as the habit of verbal speech has now been superadded, understanding comes to be abstracted from seeing, and thenceforward develops independently as reasoning; to the instantly-comprehending *technique* is added the reflective *theory*. Technique applies itself to visible near things and plain needs, theory to the distance and the terrors of

the invisible. By the side of the petty knowledge of everyday life it sets up belief. And still they evolve, there is a new knowledge and a new and higher technique, and to the myth there is added the cult. The one teaches how to know the "numina," the other how to conquer them. For theory in the eminent sense is religious through and through. It is only in quite late states that scientific theory evolves out of religious, *through men having become aware of methods*. Apart from this there is little alteration. The image-world of physics remains mythic, its procedure remains a cult of conjuring the powers in things, and the images that it forms and the methods that it uses remain generically dependent upon those of the appropriate religion.

From the later days of the Renaissance onward, the notion of God has steadily ap-

From *The Decline of the West*, by Oswald Spengler. Copyright, 1926, 1928, 1932, by Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.



## Machine Against Man

proximated, in the spirit of every man of high significance, to the idea of pure endless Space. . . . He is no longer the Father of St. Francis of Assisi and the high-vaulted cathedrals, the personally-present, caring and mild God felt by Gothic painters like Giotto and Stephen Lochner, but an impersonal principle; unimaginable, intangible, working mysteriously in the Infinite. Every relic of personality dissolves into insensible abstraction, such a divinity as only instrumental music of the grand style is capable of representing, a divinity before which painting breaks down and drops into the background. This God-feeling it was that formed the scientific world-image of the West, its "Nature," its "experience" and therefore its theories and its methods, in direct contradiction to those of the Classical. The force which moves the mass—that is what Michelangelo painted in the Sistine Chapel; . . . that is what in Shakespearean tragedy fills with world-becoming scenes widened to infinity. And that is what Galileo and Newton captured in formulae and concepts. . . .

The figure of the modern sorcerer—a switchboard with levers and labels at which the workman calls mighty effects into play by the pressure of a finger without possessing the slightest notion of their essence—is only the symbol of human technique in general. The picture of the light-world around us—in so far as we have developed it critically, analytically, as theory, as picture—is nothing but a switchboard of the kind, on which particular things are so labeled that by (so to say) pressing the appropriate button particular effects follow with certainty. The secret itself remains none the less oppressive on that account. But through this technique the waking-consciousness does, all the same, intervene masterfully in the fact-

world. Life *makes use* of thought as an "open sesame," and at the peak of many a Civilization, in its great cities, there arrives finally the moment when technical critique becomes tired of being life's servant and makes itself tyrant. The Western Culture is even now experiencing an orgy of this unbridled thought, and on a tragic scale.

Man has listened-in to the march of Nature and made notes of its indices. He begins to imitate it by means and methods that utilize the laws of the cosmic pulse. He is emboldened to play the part of God. . . .

The Faustian inventor and discoverer is a unique type. The primitive force of his will, the brilliance of his visions, the steely energy of his practical ponderings, must appear queer and incomprehensible to anyone at the standpoint of another Culture, but for us they are in the blood. Our whole Culture has a discoverer's soul. To *dis*-cover that which is not seen, to draw it into the light-world of the inner eye so as to master it—that was its stubborn passion from the first days on. All its great inventions slowly ripened in the deeps, to emerge at last with the necessity of a Destiny. All of them were very nearly approached by the high-hearted, happy research of the early Gothic monks. Here, if anywhere, the religious origins of all technical thought are manifested. These meditative discoverers in their cells, who with prayers and fastings *wrung* God's secret out of him, felt that they were *serving* God thereby. Here is the Faust-figure, the grand symbol of a true discovering Culture. The *Scientia experimentalis*, as Roger Bacon was the first to call nature-research, the *insistent* questioning of Nature with levers and screws, began that of which the issue lies under our eyes as a countryside sprouting factory-chimneys

and conveyor-towers. But for all of them, too, there was the truly Faustian danger of the Devil's having a hand in the game, the risk that he was leading them in spirit to that mountain on which he promises all the power of the earth. This is the significance of the *perpetuum mobile* dreamed of by those strange Dominicans like Petrus Peregrinus, who would wrest the almightiness from God. Again and again they succumbed to this ambition; they forced this secret out of God in order themselves to be God. They listened for the laws of the cosmic pulse in order to overpower it. And so they created the *idea of the machine* as a small cosmos obeying the will of man alone. But with that they overpassed the slender border-line whereat the reverent piety of others saw the beginning of sin, and on it, from Roger Bacon to Giordano Bruno, they came to grief. Ever and ever again, true belief has regarded the machine as of the Devil.

Then followed . . . the discovery of the steam-engine, which upset everything and transformed economic life from the foundations up. Till then nature had rendered services, but now she was tied to the yoke *as a slave*, and her work was as though in contempt measured by a standard of horse-power. We advanced from the muscle-force of the Negro, which was set to work in organized routines, to the organic reserves of the Earth's crust, where the life-forces of millennia lay stored as coal; and today we cast our eyes on inorganic nature, where water-forces are already being brought in to supplement coal. As the horse-powers run to millions and milliards, the numbers of the population increase and increase, on a scale that no other Culture ever thought possible. This growth is a *product of the Machine*, which insists on being used and directed, and to that end centuples the forces of each

individual. For the sake of the machine, human life becomes precious. *Work* becomes the great word of ethical thinking; in the eighteenth century it loses its derogatory implication in all languages. The machine works and forces the man to co-operate. The entire Culture reaches a degree of activity such that the earth trembles under it.

And what now develops, in the space of hardly a century, is a drama of such greatness, that the men of a future Culture, with other souls and other passions, will hardly be able to resist the conviction that "in those days" nature herself was tottering. The politics stride over cities and peoples; even the economics, deeply as they bite into the destinies of the plant and animal worlds, merely touch the fringe of life and efface themselves. But this technique will leave traces of its hey-day behind it when all else is lost and forgotten. For this Faustian passion has altered the Face of the Earth.

This is the outward- and upward-straining life-feeling—true descendant, therefore, of the Gothic—as expressed in Goethe's Faust monologue when the steam-engine was yet young. The intoxicated soul wills to fly above space and Time. An ineffable longing tempts him to indefinable horizons. Man would free himself from the earth, rise into the infinite, leave the bonds of the body, and circle in the universe of space amongst the stars. That which the glowing and soaring inwardness of St. Bernard sought at the beginning, that which Grünewald and Rembrandt conceived in their backgrounds, and Beethoven in the trans-earthly tones of his last quartets, comes back now in the intellectual intoxication of the inventions that crowd one upon another. Hence the fantastic traffic that crosses the continents in a few days, that

## Machine Against Man

puts itself across oceans in floating cities, that bores through mountains, rushes about in subterranean labyrinths, uses the steam-engine till its last possibilities have been exhausted, and then passes on to the gas-engine, and finally raises itself above the roads and railways and flies in the air; hence it is that the spoken word is sent in one moment over all the oceans; hence comes the ambition to break all records and beat all dimensions, to build giant halls for giant machines, vast ships and bridge-spans, buildings that deliriously scrape the clouds, fabulous forces pressed together to a focus to obey the hand of a child, stamping and quivering and droning\* works of steel and glass in which tiny man moves as unlimited monarch and, at the last, feels nature as beneath him.

And these machines become in their forms less and ever less human, more ascetic, mystic, esoteric. They weave the earth over with an infinite web of subtle forces, currents, and tensions. Their bodies become ever more and more immaterial, ever less noisy. The wheels, rollers, and levers are vocal no more. All that matters withdraws itself into the interior. Man has felt the machine to be devilish, and rightly. It signifies in the eyes of the believer the deposition of God. It delivers sacred Causality over to man and by him, with a sort of foreseeing omniscience, is set in motion, silent and irresistible.

Never save here has a microcosm felt itself superior to its macrocosm, but here the little life-units have by the sheer force of their intellect made the unliving dependent upon themselves. It is a triumph, so far as we can see, unparalleled. Only this our Culture has achieved it, and perhaps only for a few centuries.

But for that very reason Faustian man has become *the slave of his creation*. His

number, and the arrangement of life as he lives it, have been driven by the machine on to a path where there is no standing still and no turning back. The peasant, the hand-worker, even the merchant, appear suddenly as inessential in comparison with the *three great figures that the Machine has bred and trained up in the cause of its development: the entrepreneur, the engineer, and the factory-worker*. Out of a quite small branch of manual work—namely, the preparation-economy—there has grown up (*in this one Culture alone*) a mighty tree that casts its shadow over all the other vocations—namely, *the economy of the machine-industry*. It forces the entrepreneur not less than the workman to obedience. *Both* become slaves, and not masters, of the machine, that now for the first time develops its devilish and occult power. But although the Socialistic theory of the present day has insisted upon looking only at the latter's contribution and has claimed the word "work" for him alone, it has all become possible only through the sovereign and decisive achievement of the former. The famous phrase concerning the "strong arm" that bids every wheel cease from running is a piece of wrong-headedness. To stop them—yes! but it does not need a worker to do that. To keep them running—no! The center of this artificial and complicated realm of the Machine is the organizer and manager. The mind, not the hand, holds it together. But, for that very reason, to preserve the ever endangered structure, *one* figure is even more important than all the energy of enterprising master-men that make cities to grow out of the ground and alter the picture of the landscape; it is a figure that is apt to be forgotten in this conflict of politics—the *engineer*, the priest of the machine, the man who knows

it. Not merely the importance, but the very existence of the industry depends upon the existence of the hundred thousand talented, rigorously schooled brains that command the technique and develop it onward and onward. The quiet engineer it is who is the machine's master and destiny. His thought is as possibility what the machine is as actuality. There have been fears, thoroughly materialistic fears, of the exhaustion of the coal-fields. But so long as there are worthy technical path-finders, dangers of this sort have no existence. When, and only when, the crop of recruits for this army fails—this army whose thought-work forms one inward unit with the work of the machine—the industry must flicker out in spite of all that managerial energy and the workers can do. Suppose that, in future generations, the most gifted minds were to find their soul's health more important than all the powers of this world; suppose that, under the influence of the metaphysic and mysticism that is taking the place of rationalism today, the very élite of intellect that is now concerned with the machine comes to be overpowered by a growing sense of its *Satanism* (it is the step from Roger Bacon to Bernard of Clairvaux)—then nothing can hinder the end of this grand drama that has been a play of intellects, with hands as mere auxiliaries.

... We are civilized, not Gothic or Rococo, people; we have to reckon with the hard cold facts of a *late* life, to which the parallel is to be found not in Pericles's Athens but in Caesar's Rome. Of great painting or great music there can no longer be, for Western people, any question. Their architectural possibilities have been exhausted these hundred years. Only *extensive* possibilities are left to them. Yet, for a sound and vigorous generation that

is filled with unlimited hopes, I fail to see that it is any disadvantage to discover sometimes that some of these hopes must come to nothing. And if the hopes thus doomed should be those most dear, well, a man who is worth anything will not be dismayed. It is true that the issue may be a tragic one for some individuals who in their decisive years are overpowered by the conviction that in the spheres of architecture, drama, painting, there is nothing left for *them* to conquer. What matter if they do go under! It has been the convention hitherto to admit no limits of any sort in these matters, and to believe that each period had its own task to do in each sphere. Tasks therefore were found by hook or by crook, leaving it to be settled posthumously whether or not the artist's faith was justified and his life-work necessary. Now, nobody but a pure romantic would take this way out. Such a pride is not the pride of a Roman. What are we to think of the individual who, standing before an exhausted quarry, would rather be told that a new vein will be struck tomorrow—the bait offered by the radically false and mannerized art of the moment—than be shown a rich and virgin clay-bed near by? The lesson, I think, would be of benefit to the coming generations, as showing them what is possible—and therefore necessary—and what is excluded from the inward potentialities of their time. Hitherto an incredible total of intellect and power has been squandered in false directions. The West-European, however historically he may think and feel, is at a certain stage of life invariably uncertain of his own direction; he gropes and feels his way and, if unlucky in environment, he loses it. But now at last the work of centuries enables him to view the disposition of his own life in relation

## *Machine Against Man*

to the general culture-scheme and to test his own powers and purposes. And I can only hope that men of the new generation may be moved by this book to devote themselves to technics instead of lyrics, the sea instead of the paint-brush, and politics instead of epistemology. Better they could not do.

### MR. MECHANO

by WILLIAM SAROYAN

AFTER THEIR ADVENTURE in the public library, Lionel and Ulysses continued to explore Ithaca. At sundown they found themselves standing at the very front of a small crowd of idlers and passers-by, watching a man in the window of a third-rate drug store. The man moved like a piece of machinery, although he *was* a human being. He looked, however, as if he had been made of wax instead of flesh. He seemed inhuman and in fact he looked like nothing so much as an upright, unburied corpse still capable of moving. The man was the most incredible thing Ulysses had seen in all of his four years of life in the world. No light came out of the man's eyes. His lips were set as if they would never part.

The man was engaged in advertising *Dr. Bradford's Tonic*. He worked between two easels. On one easel was a sign on which this message had been printed: "Mr. Mechano—The Machine Man—Half Machine, Half Human. More Dead Than Alive. \$50 if you can make him smile. \$500 if you can make him laugh." On the other easel Mr. Mechano placed paste-board cards which he took in an extremely mechanical fashion from the small table in front of the easel. On these cards were printed various messages urging people to buy the patent medicine which Dr. Brad-

ford had invented and thereby to become more alive. After each new card had been placed on the easel Mr. Mechano pointed at each word of the message on the card with a pointer. When all ten of the cards had been placed on the easel, Mr. Mechano removed them all and put them back on the table and began the procedure all over again.

"It's a man, Ulysses," Lionel said to his friend. "I can see him. It's not a machine, Ulysses. It's a man! See his eyes? He's alive. See him?"

The card Mr. Mechano had just placed on the easel read: "Don't drag yourself around half dead. Enjoy life. Take Dr. Bradford's Tonic and feel like a new man."

"There's another card," Lionel said. "It says something on that card." Suddenly he was weary and eager to get home. "Come on, Ulysses," he said, "let's go. We've seen him go through all the cards three times. Let's go home. It's almost night now." He took his friend by the hand, but Ulysses drew his hand away.

"Come on, Ulysses!" Lionel said. "I've got to go home now. I'm hungry." But Ulysses did not want to go. It seemed that he did not even *hear* Lionel's words.

"I'm going, Ulysses," Lionel challenged. He waited for Ulysses to turn and go with

## Mr. Mechano

him, but the boy did not budge. A little hurt and amazed by this betrayal of friendship, Lionel began to walk home, turning every three or four steps to see if his friend was not going to join him after all. But no, Ulysses wanted to stay and watch Mr. Mechano. Lionel felt deeply wounded as he continued his journey home. "I thought he was my best friend in the whole world," he said.

Ulysses stood among the handful of people watching Mr. Mechano until at last only he and an old man were left. Mr. Mechano went right on picking up the cards and putting them on the easel. He went right on pointing to each word on each card. Soon the old man went away too, and then only Ulysses stood on the sidewalk looking up at the strange human being in the window of the drug store. It was growing dark now. When the street lights came on, Ulysses came out of the trance of fascination into which the vision of Mr. Mechano had placed him. It was almost as if he had become hypnotized by the sight of the man. Now, out of the trance, he looked around. Day had ended and everybody had gone—The only thing left anywhere was something for which he had no word—Death.

The small boy looked back suddenly at the mechanical man. It seemed then that the man was looking at *him*. There was swift and fierce terror in the boy. Suddenly he was running away. The few people he saw in the streets now seemed full of death, too, like Mr. Mechano. They seemed suddenly ugly, not beautiful, as they had always seemed before. Ulysses ran until he was almost exhausted. He stopped, breathing hard and almost crying. He looked around, feeling a deep silent steady horror in all things—the horror of Mr. Mechano—Death! He had

never before known fear of *any* kind, let alone fear such as this, and it was the most difficult thing in the world for him to know what to do. His poise was all gone—scattered by the fear of the horror catching up with *him*, and he began to run again. This time as he ran he said to himself, almost crying, "Papa, Mama, Marcus, Bess, Homer! Papa, Mama, Marcus, Bess, Homer!"

The world was surely wonderful and it was surely full of good things to be seen again and again, but now the world was a thing to escape, only he could think of no direction to take. He wanted swiftly to reach somebody of his family. He stood panic-stricken, and then began moving a few steps in one direction and then a few in another, feeling all around him a presence of incredible disaster, a disaster he could escape only by reaching his father, his mother, one of his brothers, or his sister. And then, instead of reaching one of these, he saw far down the street the leader of the neighborhood gang, August Gottlieb. The newsboy was standing on a deserted street corner, calling out the headline as if the area around him were full of people who must be told what had happened that day in the world. Hollering headlines had always seemed slightly ridiculous to August Gottlieb because, for one thing, the headlines were always about murder of one sort or another and, for another, because it seemed somehow a thing of bad taste to go about among people in the streets of Ithaca lifting his voice. Consequently, the newsboy felt pleased when at last he discovered that the streets were deserted. Without even knowing that he was doing such a thing, whenever the streets had become empty of the people of Ithaca, August Gottlieb, as if grateful for his almost solitary inhab-

## *Machine Against Man*

itance of the city, lifted his voice more powerfully than ever, calling out the day's miserable news. What could a man do about the news—sell a paper, and make a few pennies? Is that what he could do about it? Wasn't it foolish for him to cry out the daily message of mistake as if it were glad tidings? Wasn't it shameful for the people to be so steadily unimpressed with the nature of every day's news? Sometimes even in his sleep the newsboy dreamed of calling out the headlines of the world's news, but there, in that inner area of experience, he felt mockery and contempt for the nature of the news, and when he shouted, it was always from a great height, and beneath him always were multitudes engaged in activities of error and crime. But the minute they heard his roaring voice, they stopped in their tracks to look up at him, and then he always shouted, "Now go back, go back where you belong! Stop your murder! Plant trees instead!" He had always loved the idea of planting a tree.

When Ulysses saw August Gottlieb on the street corner, much of the terror in his heart passed away and he began to feel that it would not be years and years before he might again find goodness and love in the world. The little boy wanted to shout out to August Gottlieb, but he couldn't make a sound. Instead, he ran with all his might to the newsboy and flung himself upon him in an embrace so forceful that it almost knocked Auggie down.

"Ulysses!" the newsboy said. "What's the matter? What are you crying about?"

Ulysses looked up into the eyes of the newsboy, but still he could not speak.

"You're scared, Ulysses," Auggie said. "Well, don't be scared—there's nothing to be scared of. Now don't cry, Ulysses. You don't have to be scared." But still the boy could not stop sobbing. "Now don't cry

any more," Auggie said, and waited for Ulysses to stop. Ulysses tried very hard not to cry and soon the sobs came at infrequent intervals, each sob like a hiccup. Then Auggie said, "Come on, Ulysses, we'll go to Homer."

At the sound of that name, the name of his brother, Ulysses smiled, and then hiccuped another sob. "Homer?" he said.

"Sure," Auggie said. "Your brother. Come on."

It was almost too wonderful for the little boy to believe. "Going to see Homer?" he said.

"Sure," Auggie said. "The telegraph office is just around the corner."

August Gottlieb and Ulysses Macauley walked around the corner to the telegraph office. They found Homer seated at the delivery desk. When Ulysses saw his brother, a wonderful thing happened to his face. All the terror left his eyes, because now he was home.

When Homer saw his brother, he got up and went to the boy and lifted him in his arms. He turned to Auggie. "What's the matter?" he said. "What's Ulysses doing in town at this hour?"

"He got lost, I guess," Auggie said. "He was crying."

"Crying?" Homer said, and then hugged his brother, just as Ulysses hiccuped another sob. "All right, Ulysses," he said. "Don't cry any more. I'll take you home on my bike. Now, don't cry."

From his desk the manager of the telegraph office, Thomas Spangler, watched the three boys, and the old telegraph operator, William Grogan, stopped his work to watch them, too. They looked at one another several times. Homer put his brother down. He knew the boy was all right again when Ulysses went to the delivery desk to look at things there. Ulysses was always all right if he was interested

in things, and now he was interested again. Homer put his arm around August and said, "Thanks, Auggie. It would have been terrible if he didn't find you."

Spangler got up and went to the two boys. "Hello, Auggie," he said. "Let me have a paper."

"Yes, sir," Auggie said, and began to go through the routine of folding the paper and making the sale, but Spangler stopped him so that he could hold the paper up before him. The manager of the telegraph office glanced at the headline, and then threw the paper into the wastebasket. "How's it going, Auggie?" he said.

"Not bad, Mr. Spangler," Auggie said. "I've made fifty-five cents so far today, but I started selling papers at one o'clock this afternoon. When I make seventy-five cents I'm going home."

"Why?" Spangler said. "Why do you want to make seventy-five cents?"

"I don't know," Auggie said. "I just thought I ought to make seventy-five cents on a Saturday. There's nobody in town hardly, but I think I can sell the rest of my papers in another hour or two. Pretty soon people start coming back to town after supper—the movie crowd."

"Well," Spangler said, "to hell with the movie crowd. You give me the rest of your papers and go on home *now*. Here's a quarter."

Even though the newsboy felt deeply grateful to the manager of the telegraph office for this gesture, somehow it didn't seem right to him. You had to sell papers one at a time and each one to a different person, and you had to stand on a street corner and holler the headline and make the people *want* to read the news. But even so, he was tired, and he wanted to get home to supper, and he never did know anybody like Spangler before, and maybe Spangler wanting to buy all his pa-

pers at once to throw into the wastebasket was the best news of the whole day anyway. It just didn't seem right that it should be a good man like Spangler, though, instead of the riffraff of the streets—well, maybe not exactly riffraff, but whatever they were. The newsboy felt that he would have to protest a sale of this sort. "I don't want to make a quarter from *you*, Mr. Spangler," he said.

"Never mind," Spangler said. "Give me the papers and go home."

"Yes, sir," Auggie said. "But maybe you'll let me do something for you to make up for this quarter some day."

"Sure, sure," Spangler said, and threw the papers into the wastebasket.

Auggie turned to Ulysses who was now studying the call box on the delivery desk. "Ulysses got lost," Auggie said to Mr. Spangler.

"Well," Spangler said, "he's not lost now. Ulysses!" he called out to the boy, and Ulysses turned to look at the manager of the telegraph office. After a moment, finding nothing appropriate to say to the boy, Spangler said, "How are you?" And after a moment, Ulysses, finding nothing appropriate to say in reply to this question said, "O.K." Each of them knew that something else had been meant.

Homer said, knowing it was the wrong thing, "He's O.K." And then Auggie, purely out of confusion, repeated these two words, as if he meant a whole new wonderful bright meaning. They all felt awkward, but very happy, especially Spangler.

William Grogan, the telegraph operator, after this exchange of ideas, brought out his bottle, unscrewed the cap, and took a good long swig.

Auggie turned to go home, but Homer stopped him. "Wait a minute, Auggie," he said, "I'll hike you home. Is it all right,



## *Machine Against Man*

Mr. Spangler? I've got a pickup at Ithaca Wine, and it's on the way home. So if it's all right, I'll hike Ulysses and Auggie home and then go and get the pickup at Ithaca Wine. Is it all right?"

"Sure, sure," Spangler said, and went back to his desk. He picked up the hard-boiled egg which he believed brought him good luck—or at least kept away anything like extremely bad luck.

"No," Auggie said to Homer. "You don't need to hike me home. Hiking two people at once on a bike is too much, Homer. I can walk it in no time."

"I'll hike you home," Homer said. "You can't walk it in no time. It's almost three miles. I can hike both of you very easily. You can sit on the frame and Ulysses can sit on the handlebars. Now come on."

The three boys went out to Homer's bicycle. The load was a heavy one, especially for a man with one bad leg, but Homer got his passengers home all right. They stopped first at the little house next door to Ara's Market—Auggie's house. Ara himself was standing in front of his store, holding the hand of his little boy. They were looking up into the sky. Down the street, next to the empty lot, Mrs. Macauley stood in the yard under the old walnut tree, taking clothes off the line. Mary and Bess were in the parlor playing and singing, and the sound of the piano and Mary's voice could be heard faintly.

Auggie got off the bicycle and went into his house. Homer stood a moment in the street, holding the bike and looking up at the sky and over at the Macauley house. Then, Auggie came out of the house and went up to Ara, the grocer.

"Did you do a lot of business today, Mr. Ara?" Auggie said to the grocer.

"Thank you, Auggie," the grocer said. "I am satisfied."

"I've got seventy-five cents I want to spend," Auggie said. "I want to get a lot of things for tomorrow."

"All right, Auggie," the grocer said, but before turning to go back into the store he pointed to the clouds in the sky and then looked at his son. "See, John?" he said. "Nighttime come now—pretty soon we get in our beds, go to sleep. Sleep all night. When daytime come, we get up again. New day."

The grocer and his son and the neighbor boy went into the store. In the meantime, Ulysses, sitting on the handlebars of his brother's bicycle, was watching his mother. Now Homer got back onto the bicycle and began to ride toward the house.

"Mama," Ulysses said to his brother, turning to look up into his face.

"Sure," Homer said. "That's Mama right over there in the yard under the tree. See her?"

As they came closer to the woman in the yard under the tree, the little brother's face grew full of a smiling light, but at the same time there was now a deep sadness in that face and in the face of the brother who held the handlebars, almost embracing him.

Homer rode straight across the empty lot into the backyard, under the walnut tree. He got off the bicycle and set Ulysses down on his feet. Ulysses stood looking at his mother. Gone from him now almost as if forever was the terror that had come from Mr. Mechano.

"He got lost, Ma," Homer said. "Auggie found him and brought him to the telegraph office. I can't stay, but I'll go in and say hello to Bess and Mary."

Homer went into the house and stood in the dark dining room, listening to his sister and the girl his brother loved. When

the song was over, he moved into the parlor. "Hello," he said.

The two girls turned. "Hello, Homer," Mary said, and then very swiftly, with great happiness, "I got a letter from Marcus today."

"Did you, Mary?" Homer said. "How is he?"

"Just fine," Mary said. "They're going away soon, but they don't know where. He says not to worry if we don't get any more letters for a while."

"He wrote to all of us," Bess said, "to Mama, and me, and even to Ulysses."

"Did he?" Homer said. He waited a moment for the announcement of the arrival of *his* letter, afraid there might not be any such announcement. At last he said very quietly, "Didn't he send *me* a letter, too?"

"Oh, of course," Mary said. "Yours is the biggest letter of all. I thought you would know that if he wrote to all of us, he would write to you, too."

Homer's sister lifted a letter off the table and handed it to him. Homer looked at the letter a long time and then his sister said, "Well, why don't you open it and read it? Read it to us."

"No, Bess," Homer said. "I've got to go now. I'll take it to the office and read it there tonight when I've got a lot of time."

"We spent the whole day looking for a job," Bess said, "but we didn't find one."

"We had a lot of fun just the same, Bess," Mary said. "It was a lot of fun just going in and asking."

"Well, fun or no fun," Homer said, "I'm glad you didn't find a job. Never mind a job. I make all the money we need, and Mary's father's got a good job at Ithaca Wine. You two don't need to go looking for a job."

"Yes, we do, Homer," Bess said. "Sure we do. And one of these days we're going

to find ourselves a job. Two places asked us to come back."

"Never mind finding a job," Homer said. He was angry now. "You don't have to find a job, Bess, or you, Mary. Any work that has to be done around here, men can do. Girls belong in homes, taking care of men, that's all—just play the piano and sing and look pretty for a fellow to see when he comes home. That's all you need to do." He stopped a moment and when he spoke again he spoke gently, turning to Mary. "When Marcus comes home," he said, "you two can rent a little house of your own and start bringing up a family, the way you want to." He turned to Bess. "And one of these days, Bess, you'll find a guy you like. That's the only job you ought to be thinking about. Just because there happens to be a war in the world isn't a reason for everybody to go out of their heads. Just stay home where you belong and help Mama, and you help your father, Mary."

He was so bossy, his sister Bess was almost proud of him, because never before had she seen him so concerned about *anything*.

"And don't forget it," Homer said to his sister and to the neighbor girl. "Now," he said, "play another song before I go."

"What song would you like to hear?" Bess said.

"Any song," Homer said.

Homer's sister Bess began to play a song and soon Mary began to sing. The messenger stood in the dark of the parlor listening and before the song was half finished he went quietly out of the house. Now, in the yard, he found Ulysses standing over the hen nest looking down at one egg.

"Ma," Homer said. His mother turned to him. "Tomorrow be sure we all go to

## *Machine Against Man*

church. All of us together—and Mary.”

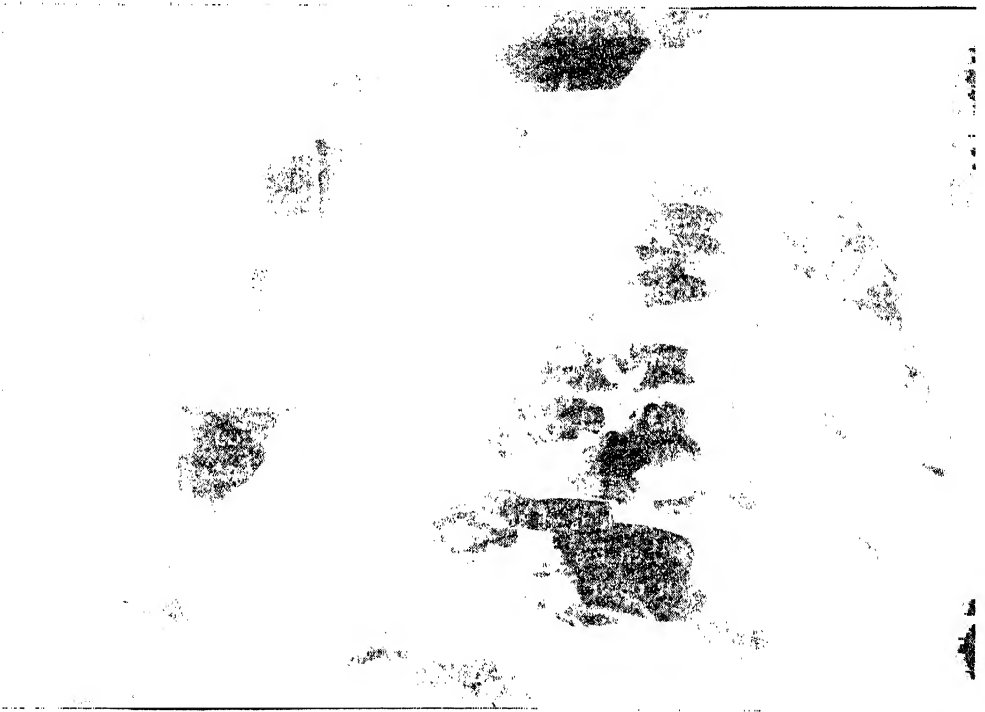
“Why, what do you mean, Homer?” Mrs. Macauley said. “We go to church almost *every* Sunday, and Mary is almost *always* with us.”

“I know,” Homer said almost impatiently. “But tomorrow, for *sure*. And with

Mary, for sure.” He turned to his brother and said, “What have you got there in your hand, Ulysses?”

“Egg,” Ulysses said as if the word were also the word for God.

Homer got onto his bicycle and began riding toward Ithaca Wine.



Soviet women working in gas masks in a garment factory

*Sovfoto*

## EDUCATION IN THE WORLD STATE

by ALDOUS HUXLEY

MR. FOSTER was left in the decanting room. The D.H.C. and his students stepped into the nearest lift and were carried up to the fifth floor.

INFANT NURSERIES. NEO-PAVLOVIAN CONDITIONING ROOMS, announced the notice board.

The Director opened a door. They were

From *Brave New World*, by Aldous Huxley. Harper & Brothers. Copyright, 1932, by Aldous Huxley.

## *Education in the World State*

in a large bare room, very bright and sunny; for the whole of the southern wall was a single window. Half a dozen nurses, trousered and jacketed in the regulation white viscose-linen uniform, their hair aseptically hidden under white caps, were engaged in setting out bowls of roses in a long row across the floor. Big bowls, packed tight with blossom. Thousands of petals, ripe-blown and silkily smooth, like the cheeks of innumerable little cherubs, but of cherubs, in that bright light, not exclusively pink and Aryan, but also luminously Chinese, also Mexican, also apoplectic with too much blowing of celestial trumpets, also pale as death, pale with the posthumous whiteness of marble.

The nurses stiffened to attention as the D.H.C. came in.

"Set out the books," he said curtly.

In silence the nurses obeyed his command. Between the rose bowls the books were duly set out—a row of nursery quartos opened invitingly each at some gaily colored image of beast or fish or bird.

"Now bring in the children."

They hurried out of the room and returned in a minute or two, each pushing a kind of tall dumbwaiter laden, on all its four wire-netted shelves, with eight-month-old babies, all exactly alike (a Bokanovsky Group, it was evident) and all (since their caste was Delta) dressed in khaki.

"Put them down on the floor."

The infants were unloaded.

"Now turn them so that they can see the flowers and books."

Turned, the babies at once fell silent, then began to crawl towards those clusters of sleek colors, those shapes so gay and brilliant on the white pages. As they approached, the sun came out of a momentary eclipse behind a cloud. The roses

flamed up as though with a sudden passion from within; a new and profound significance seemed to suffuse the shining pages of the books. From the ranks of the crawling babies came little squeals of excitement, gurgles and twitterings of pleasure.

The Director rubbed his hands. "Excellent!" he said. "It might almost have been done on purpose."

The swiftest crawlers were already at their goal. Small hands reached out uncertainly, touched, grasped, unpetaling the transfigured roses, crumpling the illuminated pages of the books. The Director waited until all were happily busy. Then, "Watch carefully," he said. And, lifting his hand, he gave the signal.

The Head Nurse, who was standing by a switchboard at the other end of the room, pressed down a little lever.

There was a violent explosion. Shriller and even shriller, a siren shrieked. Alarm bells maddeningly sounded.

The children started, screamed: their faces were distorted with terror.

"And now," the Director shouted (for the noise was deafening), "now we proceed to rub in the lesson with a mild electric shock."

He waved his hand again, and the Head Nurse pressed a second lever. The screaming of the babies suddenly changed its tone. There was something desperate, almost insane, about the sharp spasmodic yelps to which they now gave utterance. Their little bodies twitched and stiffened; their limbs moved jerkily as if to the tug of unseen wires.

"We can electrify that whole strip of floor," bawled the Director in explanation. "But that's enough," he signaled to the nurse.

The explosions ceased, the bells stopped

## *Machine Against Man*

ringing, the shriek of the siren died down from tone to tone into silence. The stiffly twitching bodies relaxed, and what had become the sob and yelp of infant maniacs broadened out once more into a normal howl of ordinary terror.

"Offer them the flowers and the books again."

The nurses obeyed; but at the approach of the roses, at the mere sight of those gaily-colored images of pussy and cock-a-doodle-doo and baa-baa black sheep, the infants shrank away in horror; the volume of their howling suddenly increased.

"Observe," said the Director triumphantly, "observe."

Books and loud noises, flowers and electric shocks—already in the infant mind these couples were compromisingly linked; and after two hundred repetitions of the same or a similar lesson would be wedded indissolubly. What man has joined, nature is powerless to put asunder.

"They'll grow up with what the psychologists used to call an 'instinctive' hatred of books and flowers. Reflexes unalterably conditioned. They'll be safe from books and botany all their lives." The Director turned to his nurses. "Take them away again."

Still yelling, the khaki babies were loaded on to their dumbwaiters and wheeled out, leaving behind them the smell of sour milk and a most welcome silence.

One of the students held up his hand; and though he could see quite well why you couldn't have lower-caste people wasting the Community's time over books, and that there was always the risk of their reading something which might undesirably decondition one of their reflexes, yet . . . well, he couldn't understand about the flowers. Why go to the trouble of

making it psychologically impossible for Deltas to like flowers?

Patiently the D.H.C. explained. If the children were made to scream at the sight of a rose, that was on grounds of high economic policy. Not so very long ago (a century or thereabouts), Gammas, Deltas, even Epsilons, had been conditioned to like flowers—flowers in particular and wild nature in general. The idea was to make them want to be going out into the country at every available opportunity, and so compel them to consume transport.

"And didn't they consume transport?" asked the student.

"Quite a lot," the D.H.C. replied. "But nothing else."

Primroses and landscapes, he pointed out, have one grave defect: they are gratuitous. A love of nature keeps no factories busy. It was decided to abolish the love of nature, at any rate among the lower classes: to abolish the love of nature, but *not* the tendency to consume transport. For of course it was essential that they should keep on going to the country, even though they hated it. The problem was to find an economically sounder reason for consuming transport than a mere affection for primroses and landscapes. It was duly found.

"We condition the masses to hate the country," concluded the Director. "But simultaneously we condition them to love all country sports. At the same time, we see to it that all country sports shall entail the use of elaborate apparatus. So that they consume manufactured articles as well as transport. Hence those electric shocks."

"I see," said the student, and was silent, lost in admiration.

There was a silence; then, clearing his throat, "Once upon a time," the Director

## *Education in the World State*

began, "while our Ford was still on earth, there was a little boy called Reuben Rabinovitch. Reuben was the child of Polish speaking parents." The Director interrupted himself. "You know what Polish is, I suppose?"

"A dead language."

"Like French and German," added another student, officiously showing off his learning.

"And 'parent'?" questioned the D.H.C.

There was an uneasy silence. Several of the boys blushed. They had not yet learned to draw the significant but often very fine distinction between smut and pure science. One, at least, had the courage to raise a hand.

"Human beings used to be . . ." he hesitated; the blood rushed to his cheeks. "Well, they used to be viviparous."

"Quite right." The Director nodded approvingly.

"And when the babies were decanted . . ."

"'Born,'" came the correction.

"Well, then they were the parents—I mean, not the babies, of course; the other ones." The poor boy was overwhelmed with confusion.

"In brief," the Director summed up, "the parents were the father and the mother." The smut that was really science fell with a crash into the boys' eye-avoiding silence. "Mother," he repeated loudly, rubbing in the science; and, leaning back in his chair, "These," he said gravely, "are unpleasant facts; I know it. But then most historical facts *are* unpleasant."

He returned to Little Reuben—to Little Reuben, in whose room, one evening, by an oversight, his father and mother (crash, crash!) happened, to leave the radio turned on.

("For you must remember that in those

days of gross viviparous reproduction, children were always brought up by their parents and not in State Conditioning Centers.")

While the child was asleep, a broadcast program from London suddenly started to come through; and the next morning, to the astonishment of his crash and crash (the more daring of the boys ventured to grin at one another), Little Reuben woke up repeating word for word a long lecture by that curious old writer ("one of the very few whose works have been permitted to come down to us"), George Bernard Shaw, who was speaking, according to a well-authenticated tradition, about his own genius. To Little Reuben's wink and snigger, this lecture was, of course, perfectly incomprehensible and, imagining that their child had suddenly gone mad, they sent for a doctor. He, fortunately, understood English, recognized the discourse as that which Shaw had broadcasted the previous evening, realized the significance of what had happened, and sent a letter to the medical press about it.

"The principle of sleep-teaching, or hypnopaedia, had been discovered." The D.H.C. made an impressive pause.

The principle had been discovered; but many, many years were to elapse before that principle was usefully applied.

"The case of Little Reuben occurred only twenty-three years after Our Ford's first T-Model was put on the market." (Here the Director made a sign of the T on his stomach and all the students reverently followed suit.) "And yet . . ."

Furiously the students scribbled. "*Hypnopaedia, first used officially in A.F. 214. Why not before? Two reasons. (a) . . .*"

"These early experimenters," the D.H.C. was saying, "were on the wrong track. They thought that hypnopaedia could be

## *Machine Against Man*

made an instrument of intellectual education . . ."

(A small boy asleep on his right side, the right arm stuck out, the right hand hanging limp over the edge of the bed. Through a round grating in the side of a box a voice speaks softly.

"The Nile is the longest river in Africa and the second in length of all the rivers of the globe. Although falling short of the length of the Mississippi-Missouri, the Nile is at the head of all rivers as regards the length of its basin, which extends through 35 degrees of latitude . . ."

At breakfast the next morning, "Tommy" someone says, "do you know which is the longest river in Africa?" A shaking of the head. "But don't you remember something that begins: The Nile is the . . ."

"The-Nile-is-the-longest-river-in-Africa-and-the-second-in-length-of-all-the-rivers-of-the-globe . . ." The words come rushing out. "Although-falling-short-of . . ."

"Well, now, which is the longest river in Africa?"

The eyes are blank. "I don't know."

"But the Nile, Tommy."

"The-Nile-is-the-longest-river-in-Africa-and-second . . ."

"Then which river is the longest, Tommy?"

Tommy bursts into tears. "I don't know," he howls.)

That howl, the Director made it plain, discouraged the earliest investigators. The experiments were abandoned. No further attempt was made to teach children the length of the Nile in their sleep. Quite rightly. You can't learn a science unless you know what it's all about.

"Whereas, if they'd only started on *moral* education," said the Director, leading the way towards the door. The stu-

dents followed him, desperately scribbling as they walked and all the way up in the lift. "Moral education, which ought never, in any circumstance, to be rational."

"Silence, silence," whispered a loud speaker as they stepped out at the fourteenth floor, and "Silence, silence," the trumpet mouths indefatigably repeated at intervals down every corridor. The students and even the Director himself rose automatically to the tips of their toes. They were Alphas, of course; but even Alphas have been well conditioned. "Silence, silence." All the air of the fourteenth floor was sibylant with the categorical imperative.

Fifty yards of tiptoeing brought them to a door which the Director cautiously opened. They stepped over the threshold into the twilight of a shuttered dormitory. Eighty cots stood in a row against the wall. There was a sound of light regular breathing and a continuous murmur, as of very faint voices remotely whispering.

A nurse rose as they entered and came to attention before the Director.

"What's the lesson this afternoon?" he asked.

"We had Elementary Sex for the first forty minutes," she answered. "But now it's switched over to Elementary Class Consciousness."

The Director walked slowly down the long line of cots. Rosy and relaxed with sleep, eighty little boys and girls lay softly breathing. There was a whisper under every pillow. The D.H.C. halted and, bending over one of the little beds, listened attentively.

"Elementary Class Consciousness, did you say? Let's have it repeated a little louder by the trumpet."

At the end of the room a loud speaker projected from the wall. The Director

walked up to it and pressed a switch.

"... all wear green," said a soft but very distinct voice, beginning in the middle of a sentence, "and Delta children wear khaki. Oh, no, I don't want to play with Delta children. And Epsilons are still worse. They're too stupid to be able to read or write. Besides they wear black, which is such a beastly color. I'm so glad I'm a Beta."

There was a pause; then the voice began again.

"Alpha children wear gray. They work much harder than we do, because they're so frightfully clever. I'm really awfully glad I'm a Beta, because I don't work so hard. And then we are much better than the Gammas and Deltas. Gammas are stupid. They all wear green, and Delta children wear khaki. Oh, no, I *don't* want to play with Delta children. And Epsilons are still worse. They're too stupid to be able . . ."

The Director pushed back the switch. The voice was silent. Only its thin ghost continued to mutter from beneath the eighty pillows.

"They'll have that repeated forty or fifty times more before they wake; then again on Thursday, and again on Saturday. A hundred and twenty times three times a week for thirty months. After which they go on to a more advanced lesson."

Roses and electric shocks, the khaki of Deltas and a whiff of asafetida—welded indissolubly before the child can speak. But wordless conditioning is crude and

wholesale; cannot bring home the finer distinctions, cannot inculcate the more complex courses of behavior. For that there must be words, but words without reason. In brief, hypnopaedia.

"The greatest moralizing and socializing force of all time."

The students took it down in their little books. Straight from the horse's mouth.

Once more the Director touched the switch.

"... so frightfully clever," the soft, insinuating, indefatigable voice was saying. "I'm really awfully glad I'm a Beta, because . . ."

Not so much like drops of water, though water, it is true, can wear holes in the hardest granite; rather, drops of liquid sealing-wax, drops that adhere, incrust, incorporate themselves with what they fall on, till finally the rock is all one scarlet blob.

"Till at last the child's mind *is* these suggestions, and the sum of the suggestions *is* the child's mind. And not the child's mind only. The adult's mind too—all his life long. The mind that judges and desires and decides—made up of these suggestions. But all these suggestions are *our* suggestions!" The Director almost shouted in his triumph. "Suggestions from the State." He banged the nearest table. "It therefore follows . . ."

A noise made him turn round.

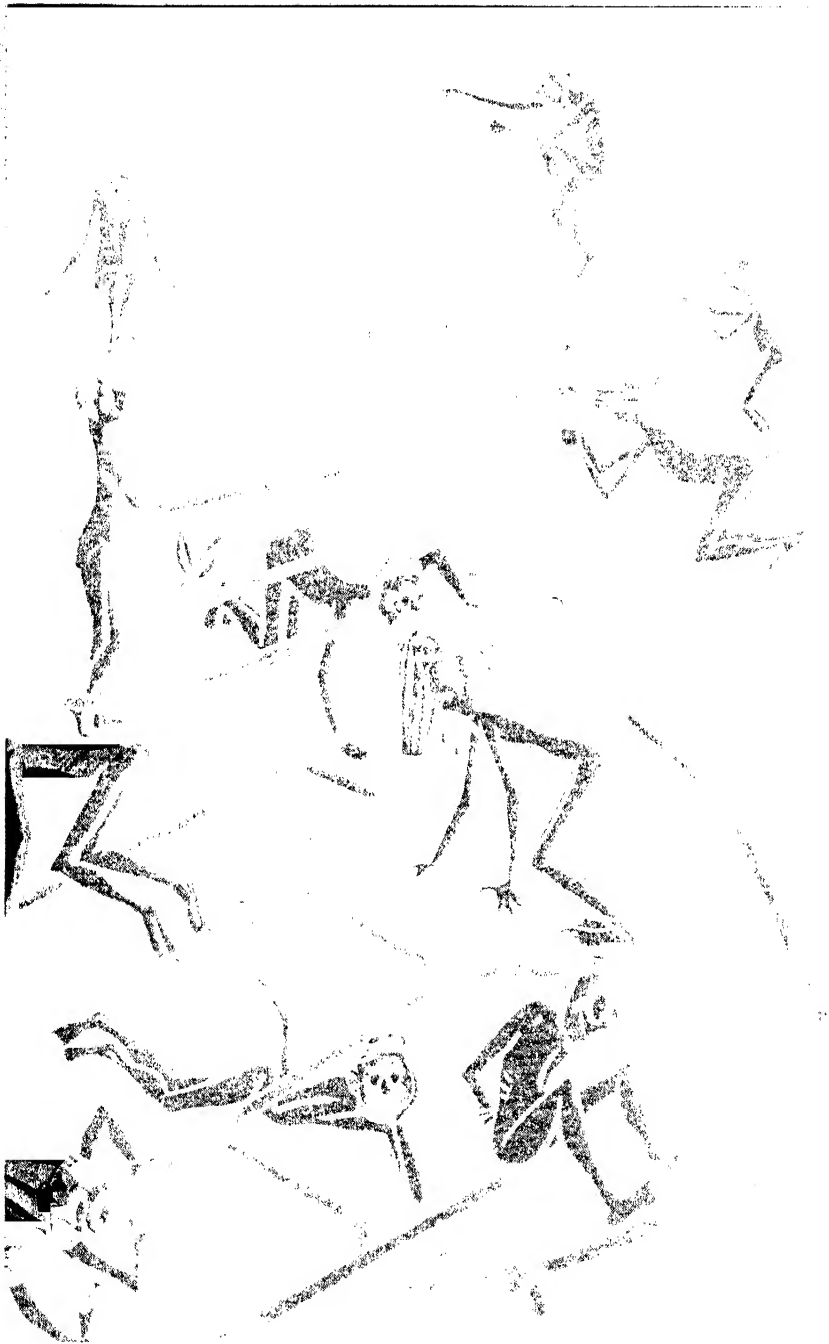
"Oh, Ford!" he said in another tone, "I've gone and woken the children."





---

## The Bright Young Men

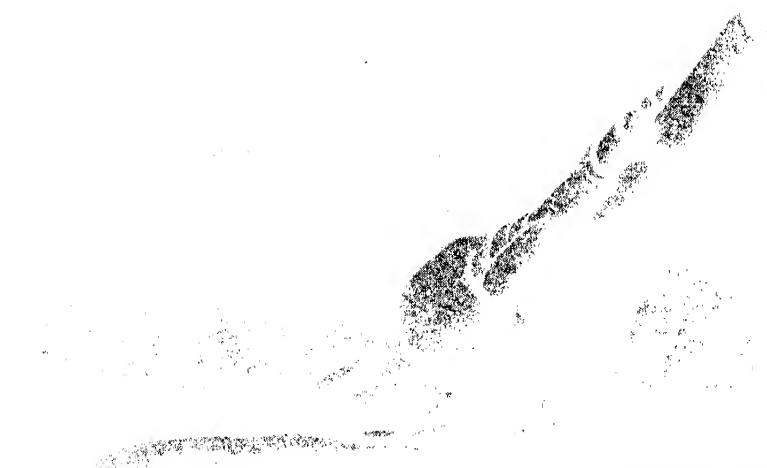


*From It's a long way to Heaven, copyright, 1945, by Abner Dean, and reproduced by permission of Rinehart & Company, Inc., Publishers.*

# ATOMAN



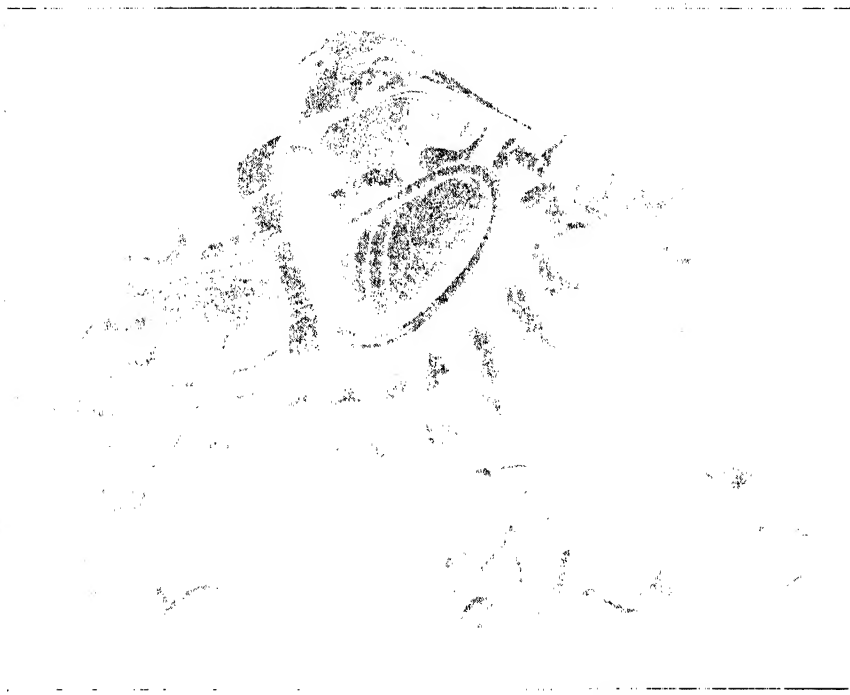
*By permission of Spark Publications*



---

*Paintings by Boris Artzybasheff.*

Photographs of paintings by Boris Artzybasheff, these two and the following picture show his conception of weapons of modern warfare.



*Painting by Boris Artzybasheff*

R. U. R.  
(ROSSUM'S UNIVERSAL ROBOTS)

*A Fantastic Melodrama*

by KAREL ČAPEK

CHARACTERS

HARRY DOMIN, <i>General Manager of Rossum's Universal Robots</i>	MR. ALQUIST, <i>Architect, Head of the Works Department of R. U. R.</i>
SULLA, <i>a Robotess</i>	CONSUL BUSMAN, <i>General Business Manager of R. U. R.</i>
MARIUS, <i>a Robot</i>	NANA
HELENA GLORY	RADIUS, <i>a Robot</i>
DR. GALL, <i>Head of the Physiological and Experimental Department of R. U. R.</i>	HELENA, <i>a Robotess</i>
MR. FABRY, <i>Engineer General, Technical Controller of R. U. R.</i>	PRIMUS, <i>a Robot</i>
DR. HALLEMEIER, <i>Head of the Institute for Psychological Training of Robots</i>	A SERVANT
	FIRST ROBOT
	SECOND ROBOT
	THIRD ROBOT

## R. U. R.

ACT I. *Central Office of the Factory of Rossum's Universal Robots*

ACT II. *Helena's Drawing Room—Ten Years Later. Morning*

ACT III. *The Same Afternoon*

EPILOGUE. *A Laboratory—One Year Later*

PLACE: *An Island.* TIME: *The Future.*

### ACT I

[*Central office of the factory of Rossum's Universal Robots. Entrance on the right. The windows on the front wall look out on the rows of factory chimneys. On the left more managing departments. DOMIN is sitting in the revolving chair at a large American writing table. On the left-hand wall large maps showing steamship and railroad routes. On the right-hand wall are fastened printed placards. ("Robot's Cheapest Labor," etc.) In contrast to these wall fittings, the floor is covered with a splendid Turkish carpet, a sofa, leather armchair, and filing cabinets. At a desk near the windows SULLA is typing letters.*]

DOMIN [*dictating*]. Ready?

SULLA. Yes.

DOMIN. To E. M. McVicker and Co., Southampton, England. "We undertake no guarantee for goods damaged in transit. As soon as the consignment was taken on board we drew your captain's attention to the fact that the vessel was unsuitable for the transport of Robots, and we are therefore not responsible for spoiled freight. We beg to remain for Rossum's Universal Robots. Yours truly." [SULLA, who has sat motionless during dictation, now types rapidly for a few seconds, then

*stops, withdrawing the completed letter.*] Ready?

SULLA. Yes.

DOMIN. Another letter. To the E. B. Huyson Agency, New York, U. S. A. "We beg to acknowledge receipt of order for five thousand Robots. As you are sending your own vessel, please dispatch as cargo equal quantities of soft and hard coal for R. U. R., the same to be credited as part payment of the amount due to us. We beg to remain, for Rossum's Universal Robots. Yours truly." [SULLA repeats the rapid typing.] Ready?

SULLA. Yes.

DOMIN. Another letter. "Friedrichswerks, Hamburg, Germany. We beg to acknowledge receipt of order for fifteen thousand Robots." [*Telephone rings.*] Hello! This is the Central Office. Yes. Certainly. Well, send them a wire. Good. [*Hangs up telephone.*] Where did I leave off?

SULLA. "We beg to acknowledge receipt of order for fifteen thousand Robots."

DOMIN. Fifteen thousand R. Fifteen thousand R. [*Enter MARIUS.*] Well, what is it?

MARIUS. There's a lady, sir, asking to see you.

Copyright, 1923, by Doubleday, Page and Company. All Rights Reserved.

CAUTION: Professionals and amateurs are hereby warned that "R. U. R.," being fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America, the British Empire, including the Dominion of Canada, and all other countries of the Copyright Union, is subject to a royalty. All rights, including professional, amateur, motion pictures, recitation, public reading, radio broadcasting and the rights of translation into foreign languages are strictly reserved. Amateurs may produce this play upon payment of a royalty of Twenty-five Dollars for each performance, payable one week before the play is given, to Samuel French, at 25 West 45th St., New York 19, N. Y., or 811 West 7th St., Los Angeles 14, Calif., or if in Canada to Samuel French (Canada) Ltd., at 480 University Ave., Toronto, Ont., Canada.

*Machine Against Man*

DOMIN. A lady? Who is she?

MARIUS. I don't know, sir. She brings this card of introduction.

DOMIN. [*reads the card*]. Ah, from President Glory. Ask her to come in.

MARIUS. Please step this way. [*Exit MARIUS.*] [*Enter HELENA GLORY.*]

HELENA. How do you do?

DOMIN. How do you do. [*Standing up.*] What can I do for you?

HELENA. You are Mr. Domin, the General Manager.

DOMIN. I am.

HELENA. I have come—

DOMIN. With President Glory's card. That is quite sufficient.

HELENA. President Glory is my father. I am Helena Glory.

DOMIN. Miss Glory, this is such a great honor for us to be allowed to welcome our great President's daughter, that—

HELENA. That you can't show me the door?

DOMIN. Please sit down. Sulla, you may go. [*Exit SULLA.*] [*Sitting down.*] How can I be of service to you, Miss Glory?

HELENA. I have come—

DOMIN. To have a look at our famous works where people are manufactured. Like all visitors. Well, there is no objection.

HELENA. I thought it was forbidden to—

DOMIN. To enter the factory. Yes, of course. Everybody comes here with someone's visiting card, Miss Glory.

HELENA. And you show them—

DOMIN. Only certain things. The manufacture of artificial people is a secret process.

HELENA. If you only knew how enormously that—

DOMIN. Interests me. Europe's talking about nothing else.

HELENA. Why don't you let me finish speaking?

DOMIN. I beg your pardon. Did you want to say something different?

HELENA. I only wanted to ask—

DOMIN. Whether I could make a special exception in your case and show you our factory. Why, certainly, Miss Glory.

HELENA. How do you know I wanted to say that?

DOMIN. They all do. But we shall consider it a special honor to show you more than we do the rest.

HELENA. Thank you.

DOMIN. But you must agree not to divulge the least . . .

HELENA [*standing up and giving him her hand*]. My word of honor.

DOMIN. Thank you. Won't you raise your veil?

HELENA. Of course. You want to see whether I'm a spy or not. I beg your pardon.

DOMIN. What is it?

HELENA. Would you mind releasing my hand?

DOMIN [*releasing it*]. I beg your pardon.

HELENA [*raising her veil*]. How cautious you have to be here, don't you?

DOMIN [*observing her with deep interest*]. Hm, of course—we—that is—

HELENA. But what is it? What's the matter?

DOMIN. I'm remarkably pleased. Did you have a pleasant crossing?

HELENA. Yes.

DOMIN. No difficulty?

HELENA. Why?

DOMIN. What I mean to say is—you're so young.

HELENA. May we go straight into the factory?

DOMIN. Yes. Twenty-two, I think.

HELENA. Twenty-two what?

DOMIN. Years.

HELENA. Twenty-one. Why do you want to know?

DOMIN. Because—as—[*With enthusiasm.*] you will make a long stay, won't you?

HELENA. That depends on how much of the factory you show me.

DOMIN. Oh, hang the factory. Oh, no, no, you shall see everything, Miss Glory. Indeed you shall. Won't you sit down?

HELENA [*crossing to couch and sitting*]. Thank you.

DOMIN. But first would you like to hear the story of the invention?

HELENA. Yes, indeed.

DOMIN [*observes HELENA with rapture and reels off rapidly*]. It was in the year 1920 that old Rossum, the great physiologist, who was then quite a young scientist, took himself to this distant island for the purpose of studying the ocean fauna, full stop. On this occasion he attempted by chemical synthesis to imitate the living matter known as protoplasm until he suddenly discovered a substance which behaved exactly like living matter although its chemical composition was different. That was in the year of 1932, exactly four hundred and forty years after the discovery of America. Whew!

HELENA. Do you know that by heart?

DOMIN. Yes. You see physiology is not in my line. Shall I go on?

HELENA. Yes, please.

DOMIN. And then, Miss Glory, old Rossum wrote the following among his chemical specimens: "Nature has found only one method of organizing living matter. There is, however, another method, more simple, flexible and rapid, which has not yet occurred to nature at all. This second process by which life can be developed was discovered by me today." Now imag-

ine him, Miss Glory, writing those wonderful words over some colloidal mess that a dog wouldn't look at. Imagine him sitting over a test tube, and thinking how the whole tree of life would grow from it, how all animals would proceed from it, beginning with some sort of beetle and ending with a man. A man of different substance from us. Miss Glory, that was a tremendous moment.

HELENA. Well?

DOMIN. Now, the thing was how to get the life out of the test tubes, and hasten development and form organs, bones and nerves and so on, and find such substances as catalytics, enzymes, hormones, and so forth, in short—you understand?

HELENA. Not much, I'm afraid.

DOMIN. Never mind. You see with the help of his tinctures he could make whatever he wanted. He could have produced a Medusa with the brain of a Socrates or a worm fifty yards long. But being without a grain of humor, he took it into his head to make a vertebrate or perhaps a man. This artificial living matter of his had a raging thirst for life. It didn't mind being sewn or mixed together. That couldn't be done with natural albumen. And that's how he set about it.

HELENA. About what?

DOMIN. About imitating nature. First of all he tried making an artificial dog. That took him several years and resulted in a sort of stunted calf which died in a few days. I'll show it to you in the museum. And then old Rossum started on the manufacture of man.

HELENA. And I must divulge this to nobody?

DOMIN. To nobody in the world.

HELENA. What a pity that it's to be found in all the school books of both Europe and America.



## *Machine Against Man*

DOMIN. Yes. But do you know what isn't in the school books? That old Rossum was mad. Seriously, Miss Glory, you must keep this to yourself. The old crank wanted to actually make people.

HELENA. But you do make people.

DOMIN. Approximately, Miss Glory. But old Rossum meant it literally. He wanted to become a sort of scientific substitute for God. He was a fearful materialist, and that's why he did it all. His sole purpose was nothing more nor less than to prove that God was no longer necessary. Do you know anything about anatomy?

HELENA. Very little.

DOMIN. Neither do I. Well, he then decided to manufacture everything as in the human body. I'll show you in the museum the bungling attempt it took him ten years to produce. It was to have been a man, but it lived for three days only. Then up came young Rossum, an engineer. He was a wonderful fellow, Miss Glory. When he saw what a mess of it the old man was making, he said: "It's absurd to spend ten years making a man. If you can't make him quicker than nature, you might as well shut up shop." Then he set about learning anatomy himself.

HELENA. There's nothing about that in the school books.

DOMIN. No. The school books are full of paid advertisements, and rubbish at that. What the school books say about the united efforts of the two great Rossums is all a fairy tale. They used to have dreadful rows. The old atheist hadn't the slightest conception of industrial matters, and the end of it was that young Rossum shut him up in some laboratory or other and let him fritter the time away with his monstrosities, while he himself started on the business from an engineer's point of view. Old Rossum cursed him and before he died

he managed to botch up two physiological horrors. Then one day they found him dead in the laboratory. And that's his whole story.

HELENA. And what about the young man?

DOMIN. Well, anyone who has looked into human anatomy will have seen at once that man is too complicated, and that a good engineer could make him more simply. So young Rossum began to overhaul anatomy and tried to see what could be left out or simplified. In short—but this isn't boring you, Miss Glory?

HELENA. No, indeed. You're—it's awfully interesting.

DOMIN. So young Rossum said to himself: "A man is something that feels happy, plays the piano, likes going for a walk, and in fact, wants to do a whole lot of things that are really unnecessary."

HELENA. Oh.

DOMIN. That are unnecessary when he wants, let us say, to weave or count. Do you play the piano?

HELENA. Yes.

DOMIN. That's good. But a working machine must not play the piano, must not feel happy, must not do a whole lot of other things. A gasoline motor must not have tassels or ornaments, Miss Glory. And to manufacture artificial workers is the same thing as to manufacture gasoline motors. The process must be of the simplest, and the product of the best from a practical point of view. What sort of worker do you think is the best from a practical point of view?

HELENA. What?

DOMIN. What sort of worker do you think is the best from a practical point of view?

HELENA. Perhaps the one who is most honest and hard-working.

R. U. R.

DOMIN. No; the one that is the cheapest. The one whose requirements are the smallest. Young Rossum invented a worker with the minimum amount of requirements. He had to simplify him. He rejected everything that did not contribute directly to the progress of work—everything that makes man more expensive. In fact, he rejected man and made the Robot. My dear Miss Glory, the Robots are not people. Mechanically they are more perfect than we are, they have an enormously developed intelligence, but they have no soul.

HELENA. How do you know they've no soul?

DOMIN. Have you ever seen what a Robot looks like inside?

HELENA. No.

DOMIN. Very neat, very simple. Really, a beautiful piece of work. Not much in it, but everything in flawless order. The product of an engineer is technically at a higher pitch of perfection than a product of nature.

HELENA. But man is supposed to be the product of God.

DOMIN. All the worse. God hasn't the least notion of modern engineering. Would you believe that young Rossum then proceeded to play at being God?

HELENA. How do you mean?

DOMIN. He began to manufacture Super-Robots. Regular giants they were. He tried to make them twelve feet tall. But you wouldn't believe what a failure they were.

HELENA. A failure?

DOMIN. Yes. For no reason at all their limbs used to keep snapping off. Evidently our planet is too small for giants. Now we only make Robots of normal size and of very high class human finish.

HELENA. I saw the first Robots at home.

The town counsel bought them for—I mean engaged them for work.

DOMIN. Bought them, dear Miss Glory. Robots are bought and sold.

HELENA. These were employed as street sweepers. I saw them sweeping. They were so strange and quiet.

DOMIN. Rossum's Universal Robot factory doesn't produce a uniform brand of Robots. We have Robots of finer and coarser grades. The best will live about twenty years. [*He rings for MARIUS.*]

HELENA. Then they die?

DOMIN. Yes, they get used up. [*Enter MARIUS.*] Marius, bring in samples of the Manual Labor Robot. [*Exit MARIUS.*] I'll show you specimens of the two extremes. This first grade is comparatively inexpensive and is made in vast quantities. [*MARIUS re-enters with two Manual Labor Robots.*] There you are; as powerful as a small tractor. Guaranteed to have average intelligence. That will do, Marius. [*MARIUS exits with Robots.*]

HELENA. They make me feel so strange.

DOMIN [*rings*]. Did you see my new typist? [*He rings for SULLA.*]

HELENA. I didn't notice her. [*Enter SULLA.*]

DOMIN. Sulla, let Miss Glory see you.

HELENA. So pleased to meet you. You must find it terribly dull in this out-of-the-way spot, don't you?

SULLA. I don't know, Miss Glory.

HELENA. Where do you come from?

SULLA. From the factory.

HELENA. Oh, you were born there?

SULLA. I was made there.

HELENA. What?

DOMIN [*laughing*]. Sulla is a Robot, best grade.

HELENA. Oh, I beg your pardon.

DOMIN. Sulla isn't angry. See, Miss

## Machine Against Man

Glory, the kind of skin we make. [*Feels the skin on SULLA's face.*] Feel her face.

HELENA. Ah, no, no.

DOMIN. You wouldn't know that she's made of different material from us, would you? Turn round, Sulla.

HELENA. Oh, stop, stop.

DOMIN. Talk to Miss Glory, Sulla.

SULLA. Please sit down. [*HELENA sits.*] Did you have a pleasant crossing?

HELENA. Oh, yes, certainly.

SULLA. Don't go back on the *Amelia*, Miss Glory. The barometer is falling steadily. Wait for the *Pennsylvania*. That's a good, powerful vessel.

DOMIN. What's its speed?

SULLA. Twenty knots. Fifty thousand tons. One of the latest vessels, Miss Glory.

HELENA. Thank you.

SULLA. A crew of fifteen hundred, Captain Harpy, eight boilers—

DOMIN. That'll do, Sulla. Now show us your knowledge of French.

HELENA. You know French?

SULLA. I know four languages. I can write: Dear Sir, Monsieur, Geehrter Herr, Cteny pane.

HELENA [*jumping up*]. Oh, that's absurd! Sulla isn't a Robot. Sulla is a girl like me. Sulla, this is outrageous! Why do you take part in such a hoax?

SULLA. I am a Robot.

HELENA. No, no, you are not telling the truth. I know they've forced you to do it for an advertisement. Sulla, you are a girl like me, aren't you?

DOMIN. I'm sorry, Miss Glory. Sulla is a Robot.

HELENA. It's a lie!

DOMIN. What? [*Rings.*] Excuse me, Miss Glory, then I must convince you. [*Enter MARIUS.*] Marius, take Sulla into the dissecting room, and tell them to open her up at once.

HELENA. Where?

DOMIN. Into the dissecting room. When they've cut her open, you can go and have a look.

HELENA. No, no!

DOMIN. Excuse me, you spoke of lies.

HELENA. You wouldn't have her killed?

DOMIN. You can't kill machines.

HELENA. Don't be afraid, Sulla, I won't let you go. Tell me, my dear, are they always so cruel to you? You mustn't put up with it, Sulla. You mustn't.

SULLA. I am a Robot.

HELENA. That doesn't matter. Robots are just as good as we are. Sulla, you wouldn't let yourself be cut to pieces?

SULLA. Yes.

HELENA. Oh, you're not afraid of death, then?

SULLA. I cannot tell, Miss Glory.

HELENA. Do you know what would happen to you in there?

SULLA. Yes, I should cease to move.

HELENA. How dreadful!

DOMIN. Marius, tell Miss Glory what you are.

MARIUS. Marius, the Robot.

DOMIN. Would you take Sulla into the dissecting room?

MARIUS. Yes.

DOMIN. Would you be sorry for her?

MARIUS. I cannot tell.

DOMIN. What would happen to her?

MARIUS. She would cease to move. They would put her into the stamping-mill.

DOMIN. That is death, Marius. Aren't you afraid of death?

MARIUS. No.

DOMIN. You see, Miss Glory, the Robots have no interest in life. They have no enjoyments. They are less than so much grass.

HELENA. Oh, stop. Send them away.

DOMIN. Marius, Sulla, you may go.  
[*Exeunt SULLA and MARIUS.*]

HELENA. How terrible! It's outrageous what you are doing.

DOMIN. Why outrageous?

HELENA. I don't know, but it is. Why do you call her Sulla?

DOMIN. Isn't it a nice name?

HELENA. It's a man's name. Sulla was a Roman general.

DOMIN. Oh, we thought that Marius and Sulla were lovers.

HELENA. Marius and Sulla were generals and fought against each other in the year—I've forgotten now.

DOMIN. Come here to the window.

HELENA. What?

DOMIN. Come here. What do you see?

HELENA. Bricklayers.

DOMIN. Robots. All our work people are Robots. And down there, can you see anything?

HELENA. Some sort of office.

DOMIN. A counting house. And in it—

HELENA. A lot of officials.

DOMIN. Robots. All our officials are Robots. And when you see the factory—  
[*Factory whistle blows.*] Noon. We have to blow the whistle because the Robots don't know when to stop work. In two hours I will show you the kneading trough.

HELENA. Kneading trough?

DOMIN. The pestle for beating up the paste. In each one we mix the ingredients for a thousand Robots at one operation. Then there are the vats for the preparation of liver, brains, and so on. Then you will see the bone factory. After that I'll show you the spinning-mill.

HELENA. Spinning-mill?

DOMIN. Yes. For weaving nerves and veins. Miles and miles of digestive tubes pass through it at a time.

HELENA. Mayn't we talk about something else?

DOMIN. Perhaps it would be better. There's only a handful of us among a hundred thousand Robots, and not one woman. We talk about nothing but the factory all day, every day. It's just as if we were under a curse, Miss Glory.

HELENA. I'm sorry I said that you were lying. [*A knock at the door.*]

DOMIN. Come in. [*From the right enter MR. FABRY, DR. GALL, DR. HALLEMEIER, MR. ALQUIST.*]

DR. GALL. I beg your pardon, I hope we don't intrude.

DOMIN. Come in. Miss Glory, here are Alquist, Fabry, Gall, Hallemeier. This is President Glory's daughter.

HELENA. How do you do.

FABRY. We had no idea—

DR. GALL. Highly honored, I'm sure—

ALQUIST. Welcome, Miss Glory. [*BUSMAN rushes in from the right.*]

BUSMAN. Hello, what's up?

DOMIN. Come in, Busman. This is Busman, Miss Glory. This is President Glory's daughter.

BUSMAN. By Jove, that's fine! Miss Glory, may we send a cablegram to the papers about your arrival?

HELENA. No, no, please don't.

DOMIN. Sit down please, Miss Glory.

BUSMAN. Allow me—[*Dragging up armchairs.*]

DR. GALL. Please—

FABRY. Excuse me—

ALQUIST. What sort of a crossing did you have?

DR. GALL. Are you going to stay long?

FABRY. What do you think of the factory, Miss Glory?

HALLEMEIER. Did you come over on the *Amelia*?

## Machine Against Man

DOMIN. Be quiet and let Miss Glory speak.

HELENA [*to DOMIN*]. What am I to speak to them about?

DOMIN. Anything you like.

HELENA. Shall . . . may I speak quite frankly?

DOMIN. Why, of course.

HELENA [*wavering, then in desperate resolution*]. Tell me, doesn't it ever distress you the way you are treated?

FABRY. By whom, may I ask?

HELENA. Why, everybody.

ALQUIST. Treated?

DR. GALL. What makes you think—?

HELENA. Don't you feel that you might be living a better life?

DR. GALL. Well, that depends on what you mean, Miss Glory.

HELENA. I mean that it's perfectly outrageous. It's terrible. [*Standing up.*] The whole of Europe is talking about the way you're being treated. That's why I came here, to see for myself, and it's a thousand times worse than could have been imagined. How can you put up with it?

ALQUIST. Put up with what?

HELENA. Good heavens, you are living creatures, just like us, like the whole of Europe, like the whole world. It's disgraceful that you must live like this.

BUSMAN. Good gracious, Miss Glory.

FABRY. Well, she's not far wrong. We live here just like red Indians.

HELENA. Worse than red Indians. May I, oh, may I call you brothers?

BUSMAN. Why not?

HELENA. Brothers, I have not come here as the President's daughter. I have come on behalf of the Humanity League. Brothers, the Humanity League now has over two hundred thousand members. Two hundred thousand people are on your side, and offer you their help.

BUSMAN. Two hundred thousand people! Miss Glory, that's a tidy lot. Not bad.

FABRY. I'm always telling you there's nothing like good old Europe. You see, they've not forgotten us. They're offering us help.

DR. GALL. What help? A theater, for instance?

HALLEMEIER. An orchestra?

HELENA. More than that.

ALQUIST. Just you?

HELENA. Oh, never mind about me. I'll stay as long as it is necessary.

BUSMAN. By Jove, that's good.

ALQUIST. Domin, I'm going to get the best room ready for Miss Glory.

DOMIN. Just a minute. I'm afraid that Miss Glory is of the opinion that she has been talking to Robots.

HELENA. Of course.

DOMIN. I'm sorry. These gentlemen are human beings just like us.

HELENA. You're not Robots?

BUSMAN. Not Robots.

HALLEMEIER. Robots indeed!

DR. GALL. No, thanks.

FABRY. Upon my honor, Miss Glory, we aren't Robots.

HELENA [*to DOMIN*]. Then why did you tell me that all your officials are Robots?

DOMIN. Yes, the officials, but not the managers. Allow me, Miss Glory: this is Mr. Fabry, General Technical Manager of R. U. R.; Dr. Gall, Head of the Physiological and Experimental Department; Dr. Hallemeier, Head of the Institute for the Psychological Training of Robots; Consul Busman, General Business Manager; and Alquist, Head of the Building Department of R. U. R.

ALQUIST. Just a builder.

HELENA. Excuse me, gentlemen, for— for— Have I done something dreadful?

ALQUIST. Not at all, Miss Glory. Please sit down.

HELENA. I'm a stupid girl. Send me back by the first ship.

DR. GALL. Not for anything in the world, Miss Glory. Why should we send you back?

HELENA. Because you know I've come to disturb your Robots for you.

DOMIN. My dear Miss Glory, we've had close upon a hundred saviors and prophets here. Every ship brings us some. Missionaries, anarchists, Salvation Army, all sorts. It's astonishing what a number of churches and idiots there are in the world.

HELENA. And you let them speak to the Robots?

DOMIN. So far we've let them all, why not? The Robots remember everything, but that's all. They don't even laugh at what the people say. Really, it is quite incredible. If it would amuse you, Miss Glory, I'll take you over to the Robot warehouse. It holds about three hundred thousand of them.

BUSMAN. Three hundred and forty-seven thousand.

DOMIN. Good! And you can say whatever you like to them. You can read the Bible, recite the multiplication table, whatever you please. You can even preach to them about human rights.

HELENA. Oh, I think that if you were to show them a little love—

FABRY. Impossible, Miss Glory. Nothing is harder to like than a Robot.

HELENA. What do you make them for, then?

BUSMAN. Ha, ha, ha, that's good! What are Robots made for?

FABRY. For work, Miss Glory! One Robot can replace two and a half workmen. The human machine, Miss Glory,

was terribly imperfect. It had to be removed sooner or later.

BUSMAN. It was too expensive.

FABRY. It was not effective. It no longer answers the requirements of modern engineering. Nature has no idea of keeping pace with modern labor. For example: from a technical point of view, the whole of childhood is a sheer absurdity. So much time lost. And then again—

HELENA. Oh, no! No!

FABRY. Pardon me. But kindly tell me what is the real aim of your League—the . . . the Humanity League.

HELENA. Its real purpose is to—to protect the Robots—and—and ensure good treatment for them.

FABRY. Not a bad object, either. A machine has to be treated properly. Upon my soul, I approve of that. I don't like damaged articles. Please, Miss Glory, enroll us all as contributing, or regular, or foundation members of your League.

HELENA. No, you don't understand me. What we really want is to—to liberate the Robots.

HALLEMEIER. How do you propose to do that?

HELENA. They are to be—to be dealt with like human beings.

HALLEMEIER. Aha. I suppose they're to vote? To drink beer? To order us about?

HELENA. Why shouldn't they drink beer?

HALLEMEIER. Perhaps they're even to receive wages?

HELENA. Of course they are.

HALLEMEIER. Fancy that, now! And what would they do with their wages, pray?

HELENA. They would buy—what they need . . . what pleases them.

HALLEMEIER. That would be very nice, Miss Glory, only there's nothing that does

## *Machine Against Man*

please the Robots. Good heavens, what are they to buy? You can feed them on pineapples, straw, whatever you like. It's all the same to them, they've no appetite at all. They've no interest in anything, Miss Glory. Why, hang it all, nobody's ever yet seen a Robot smile.

HELENA. Why . . . why don't you make them happier?

HALLEMEIER. That wouldn't do, Miss Glory. They are only workmen.

HELENA. Oh, but they're so intelligent.

HALLEMEIER. Confoundedly so, but they're nothing else. They've no will of their own. No passion. No soul.

HELENA. No love?

HALLEMEIER. Love? Rather not. Robots don't love. Not even themselves.

HELENA. Nor defiance?

HALLEMEIER. Defiance? I don't know. Only rarely, from time to time.

HELENA. What?

HALLEMEIER. Nothing particular. Occasionally they seem to go off their heads. Something like epilepsy, you know. It's called Robot's cramp. They'll suddenly sling down everything they're holding, stand still, gnash their teeth—and then they have to go into the stamping-mill. It's evidently some breakdown in the mechanism.

DOMIN. A flaw in the works that has to be removed.

HELENA. No, no, that's the soul.

FABRY. Do you think that the soul first shows itself by a gnashing of teeth?

HELENA. Perhaps it's a sort of revolt. Perhaps it's just a sign that there's a struggle within. Oh, if you could infuse them with it!

DOMIN. That'll be remedied, Miss Glory. Dr. Gall is just making some experiments—

DR. GALL. Not with regard to that,

Domin, At present I am making pain-nerves.

HELENA. Pain-nerves?

DR. GALL. Yes, the Robots feel practically no bodily pain. You see, young Rossum provided them with too limited a nervous system. We must introduce suffering.

HELENA. Why do you want to cause them pain?

DR. GALL. For industrial reasons, Miss Glory. Sometimes a Robot does damage to himself because it doesn't hurt him. He puts his hand into the machine, breaks his finger, smashes his head, it's all the same to him. We must provide them with pain. That's an automatic protection against damage.

HELENA. Will they be happier when they feel pain?

DR. GALL. On the contrary; but they will be more perfect from a technical point of view.

HELENA. Why don't you create a soul for them?

DR. GALL. That's not in our power.

FABRY. That's not in our interest.

BUSMAN. That would increase the cost of production. Hang it all, my dear young lady, we turn them out at such a cheap rate. A hundred and fifty dollars each fully dressed, and fifteen years ago they cost ten thousand. Five years ago we used to buy the clothes for them. Today we have our own weaving mill, and now we even export cloth five times cheaper than other factories. What do you pay a yard for cloth, Miss Glory?

HELENA. I don't know really, I've forgotten.

BUSMAN. Good gracious, and you want to found a Humanity League? It only costs a third now, Miss Glory. All prices are today a third of what they were and

they'll fall still lower, lower, lower, like that.

HELENA. I don't understand.

BUSMAN. Why, bless you, Miss Glory, it means that the cost of labor has fallen. A Robot, food and all, costs three quarters of a cent per hour. That's mighty important, you know. All factories will go pop like chestnuts if they don't at once buy Robots to lower the cost of production.

HELENA. And get rid of their workmen?

BUSMAN. Of course. But in the meantime, we've dumped five hundred thousand tropical Robots down on the Argentine pampas to grow corn. Would you mind telling me how much you pay a pound for bread?

HELENA. I've no idea.

BUSMAN. Well, I'll tell you. It now costs two cents in good old Europe. A pound of bread for two cents, and the Humanity League knows nothing about it. Miss Glory, you don't realize that even that's too expensive. Why, in five years' time I'll wager—

HELENA. What?

BUSMAN. That the cost of everything won't be a tenth of what it is now. Why, in five years we'll be up to our ears in corn and everything else.

ALQUIST. Yes, and all the workers throughout the world will be unemployed.

DOMIN. Yes, Alquist, they will. Yes, Miss Glory, they will. But in ten years Rossum's Universal Robots will produce so much corn, so much cloth, so much everything, that things will be practically without price. There will be no poverty. All work will be done by living machines. Everybody will be free from worry and liberated from the degradation of labor. Everybody will live only to perfect himself.

HELENA. Will he?

DOMIN. Of course. It's bound to happen. But then the servitude of man to man and the enslavement of man to matter will cease. Of course, terrible things may happen at first, but that simply can't be avoided. Nobody will get bread at the price of life and hatred. The Robots will wash the feet of the beggar and prepare a bed for him in his house.

ALQUIST. Domin, Domin. What you say sounds too much like Paradise. There was something good in service and something great in humility. There was some kind of virtue in toil and weariness.

DOMIN. Perhaps. But we cannot reckon with what is lost when we start out to transform the world. Man shall be free and supreme; he shall have no other aim, no other labor, no other care than to perfect himself. He shall serve neither matter nor man. He will not be a machine and a device for production. He will be Lord of creation.

BUSMAN. Amen.

FABRY. So be it.

HELENA. You have bewildered me—I should like—I should like to believe this.

DR. GALL. You are younger than we are, Miss Glory. You will live to see it.

HALLEMEIER. True. Don't you think Miss Glory might lunch with us?

DR. GALL. Of course. Domin, ask on behalf of us all.

DOMIN. Miss Glory, will you do us the honor?

HELENA. When you know why I've come—

FABRY. For the League of Humanity, Miss Glory.

HELENA. Oh, in that case, perhaps—

FABRY. That's fine! Miss Glory, excuse me for five minutes.



## Machine Against Man

DR. GALL. Pardon me, too, dear Miss Glory.

BUSMAN. I won't be long.

HALLEMEIER. We're all very glad you've come.

BUSMAN. We'll be back in exactly five minutes. [*All rush out except DOMIN and HELENA.*]

HELENA. What have they all gone off for?

DOMIN. To cook, Miss Glory.

HELENA. To cook what?

DOMIN. Lunch. The Robots do our cooking for us and as they've no taste it's not altogether—Hallemeier is awfully good at grills and Gall can make a kind of sauce, and Busman knows all about omelettes.

HELENA. What a feast! And what's the specialty of Mr.—your builder?

DOMIN. Alquist? Nothing. He only lays the table. And Fabry will get together a little fruit. Our cuisine is very modest, Miss Glory.

HELENA. I wanted to ask you something—

DOMIN. And I wanted to ask you something, too. [*Looking at watch.*] Five minutes.

HELENA. What did you want to ask me?

DOMIN. Excuse me, you asked first.

HELENA. Perhaps it's silly of me, but why do you manufacture female Robots when—when—

DOMIN. When sex means nothing to them?

HELENA. Yes.

DOMIN. There's a certain demand for them, you see. Servants, saleswomen, stenographers. People are used to it.

HELENA. But—but, tell me, are the Robots male and female mutually—completely without—

DOMIN. Completely indifferent to each other, Miss Glory. There's no sign of any affection between them.

HELENA. Oh, that's terrible.

DOMIN. Why?

HELENA. It's so unnatural. One doesn't know whether to be disgusted or to hate them, or perhaps—

DOMIN. To pity them?

HELENA. That's more like it. What did you want to ask me about?

DOMIN. I should like to ask you, Miss Helena, whether you will marry me?

HELENA. What?

DOMIN. Will you be my wife?

HELENA. No! The idea!

DOMIN [*looking at his watch*]. Another three minutes. If you won't marry me you'll have to marry one of the other five.

HELENA. But why should I?

DOMIN. Because they're all going to ask you in turn.

HELENA. How could they dare do such a thing?

DOMIN. I'm very sorry, Miss Glory. It seems they've all fallen in love with you.

HELENA. Please don't let them. I'll—I'll go away at once.

DOMIN. Helena, you wouldn't be so cruel as to refuse us.

HELENA. But, but—I can't marry all six.

DOMIN. No, but one anyhow. If you don't want me, marry Fabry.

HELENA. I won't.

DOMIN. Dr. Gall.

HELENA. I don't want any of you.

DOMIN [*again looking at his watch*]. Another two minutes.

HELENA. I think you'd marry any woman who came here.

DOMIN. Plenty of them have come, Helena.

HELENA. Young?

## R. U. R.

DOMIN. Yes.

HELENA. Why didn't you marry one of them?

DOMIN. Because I didn't lose my head. Until today. Then, as soon as you lifted your veil—[HELENA turns her head away.] Another minute.

HELENA. But I don't want you, I tell you.

DOMIN [laying both hands on her shoulders]. One more minute! Now you either have to look me straight in the eye and say "No," violently, and then I'll leave you alone—or— [HELENA looks at him.]

HELENA [turning away]. You're mad!

DOMIN. A man has to be a bit mad, Helena. That's the best thing about him.

HELENA. You are—you are—

DOMIN. Well?

HELENA. Don't, you're hurting me.

DOMIN. The last chance, Helena. Now, or never—

HELENA. But—but, Harry— [He embraces and kisses her. Knocking at the door.]

DOMIN [releasing her]. Come in. [Enter BUSMAN, DR. GALL, and HALLEMEIER in kitchen aprons. FABRY with a bouquet and ALQUIST with a napkin over his arm.] Have you finished your job?

BUSMAN. Yes.

DOMIN. So have we. [For a moment the men stand nonplused; but as soon as they realize what DOMIN means they rush forward, congratulating HELENA and DOMIN as the curtain falls.]

## ACT II

[HELENA's drawing room. On the left a baize door, and a door to the music room, on the right a door to HELENA's bedroom. In the center are windows looking out on the sea and the harbor. A table with odds and ends, a sofa and chairs, a writing table with an electric lamp, on the right a fireplace. On a small table back of the sofa, a small reading lamp. The whole drawing room in all its details is of a modern and purely feminine character. Ten years have elapsed since Act I. DOMIN, FABRY, HALLEMEIER enter on tiptoe from the left, each carrying a potted plant.]

HALLEMEIER [putting down his flower and indicating the door to right]. Still asleep? Well, as long as she's asleep she can't worry about it.

DOMIN. She knows nothing about it.

FABRY [putting plant on writing desk]. I certainly hope nothing happens today.

HALLEMEIER. For goodness' sake drop it

all. Look, Harry, this is a fine cyclamen, isn't it? A new sort, my latest—Cyclamen Helena.

DOMIN [looking out of the window]. No signs of the ship. Things must be pretty bad.

HALLEMEIER. Be quiet. Suppose she heard you.

DOMIN. Well, anyway, the *Ultimus* arrived just in time.

FABRY. You really think that today—?

DOMIN. I don't know. Aren't the flowers fine?

HALLEMEIER. These are my new primroses. And this is my new jasmine. I've discovered a wonderful way of developing flowers quickly. Splendid varieties, too. Next year I'll be developing marvelous ones.

DOMIN. What . . . next year?

FABRY. I'd give a good deal to know what's happening at Havre with—

DOMIN. Keep quiet.

## Machine Against Man

HELENA [*calling from right*]. Nana!

DOMIN. She's awake. Out you go. [*All go out on tiptoe through upper left door.*]  
[*Enter NANA from lower left door.*]

NANA. Horrid mess! Pack of heathens. If I had my say I'd—

HELENA [*backwards in the doorway*]. Nana, come and do up my dress.

NANA. I'm coming. So you're up at last. [*Fastening HELENA's dress.*] My gracious, what brutes!

HELENA. Who?

NANA. If you want to turn around, then turn around, but I shan't fasten you up.

HELENA. What are you grumbling about now?

NANA. These dreadful creatures, these heathen—

HELENA. The Robots?

NANA. I wouldn't even call them by name.

HELENA. What's happened?

NANA. Another of them here has caught it. He began to smash up the statues and pictures in the drawing room, gnashed his teeth, foamed at the mouth—quite mad. Worse than an animal.

HELENA. Which of them caught it?

NANA. The one—well, he hasn't got any Christian name. The one in charge of the library.

HELENA. Radius?

NANA. That's him. My goodness, I'm scared of them. A spider doesn't scare me as much as them.

HELENA. But, Nana, I'm surprised you're not sorry for them.

NANA. Why, you're scared of them, too! You know you are. Why else did you bring me here?

HELENA. I'm not scared, really I'm not, Nana. I'm only sorry for them.

NANA. You're scared. Nobody could help being scared. Why, the dog's scared of

them: he won't take a scrap of meat out of their hands. He draws in his tail and howls when he knows they're about.

HELENA. The dog has no sense.

NANA. He's better than them, and he knows it. Even the horse shies when he meets them. They don't have any young, and a dog has young, everyone has young—

HELENA. Please fasten up my dress, Nana.

NANA. I say it's against God's will to—

HELENA. What is it that smells so nice?

NANA. Flowers.

HELENA. What for?

NANA. Now you can turn around.

HELENA. Oh, aren't they lovely. Look, Nana. What's happening today?

NANA. It ought to be the end of the world. [*Enter DOMIN.*]

HELENA. Oh, hello, Harry. Harry, why all these flowers?

DOMIN. Guess.

HELENA. Well, it's not my birthday!

DOMIN. Better than that.

HELENA. I don't know. Tell me.

DOMIN. It's ten years ago today since you came here.

HELENA. Ten years? Today— Why— [*They embrace.*]

NANA. I'm off. [*Exits lower door, left.*]

HELENA. Fancy you remembering!

DOMIN. I'm really ashamed, Helena. I didn't.

HELENA. But you—

DOMIN. They remembered.

HELENA. Who?

DOMIN. Busman, Hallemeier, all of them. Put your hand in my pocket.

HELENA. Pearls! A necklace. Harry, is that for me?

DOMIN. It's from Busman.

HELENA. But we can't accept it, can we?

DOMIN. Oh, yes, we can. Put your hand in the other pocket.

HELENA [*takes a revolver out of his pocket*]. What's that?

DOMIN. Sorry. Not that. Try again.

HELENA. Oh, Harry, what do you carry a revolver for?

DOMIN. It got there by mistake.

HELENA. You never used to carry one.

DOMIN. No, you're right. There, that's the pocket.

HELENA. A cameo. Why, it's a Greek cameo!

DOMIN. Apparently. Anyhow, Fabry says it is.

HELENA. Fabry? Did Mr. Fabry give me that?

DOMIN. Of course. [*Opens the door at the left.*] And look in here. Helena, come and see this.

HELENA. Oh, isn't it fine! Is this from you?

DOMIN. No, from Alquist. And there's another on the piano.

HELENA. This must be from you.

DOMIN. There's a card on it.

HELENA. From Dr. Gall. [*Reappearing in the doorway.*] Oh, Harry, I feel embarrassed at so much kindness.

DOMIN. Come here. This is what Hallemeier brought you.

HELENA. These beautiful flowers?

DOMIN. Yes. It's a new kind. Cyclamen Helena. He grew them in honor of you. They are almost as beautiful as you.

HELENA. Harry, why do they all—

DOMIN. They're awfully fond of you. I'm afraid that my present is a little—Look out of the window.

HELENA. Where?

DOMIN. Into the harbor.

HELENA. There's a new ship.

DOMIN. That's your ship.

HELENA. Mine? How do you mean?

DOMIN. For you to take trips in—for your amusement.

HELENA. Harry, that's a gunboat.

DOMIN. A gunboat? What are you thinking of? It's only a little bigger and more solid than most ships.

HELENA. Yes, but with guns.

DOMIN. Oh, yes, with a few guns. You'll travel like a queen, Helena.

HELENA. What's the meaning of it? Has anything happened?

DOMIN. Good heavens, no. I say, try these pearls.

HELENA. Harry, have you had bad news?

DOMIN. On the contrary, no letters have arrived for a whole week.

HELENA. Nor telegrams?

DOMIN. Nor telegrams.

HELENA. What does that mean?

DOMIN. Holidays for us. We all sit in the office with our feet on the table and take a nap. No letters, no telegrams. Oh, glorious.

HELENA. Then you'll stay with me today?

DOMIN. Certainly. That is, we will see. Do you remember ten years ago today? "Miss Glory, it's a great honor to welcome you."

HELENA. "Oh, Mr. Manager, I'm so interested in your factory."

DOMIN. "I'm sorry, Miss Glory, it's strictly forbidden. The manufacture of artificial people is a secret."

HELENA. "But to oblige a young lady who has come a long way."

DOMIN. "Certainly, Miss Glory, we have no secrets from you."

HELENA [*seriously*]. Are you sure, Harry?

DOMIN. Yes.

HELENA. "But I warn you, sir; this young lady intends to do terrible things."

## Machine Against Man

DOMIN. "Good gracious, Miss Glory. Perhaps she doesn't want to marry me."

HELENA. "Heaven forbid. She never dreamt of such a thing. But she came here intending to stir up a revolt among your Robots."

DOMIN [*suddenly serious*]. A revolt of the Robots!

HELENA. Harry, what's the matter with you?

DOMIN [*laughing it off*]. "A revolt of the Robots, that's a fine idea, Miss Glory. It would be easier for you to cause bolts and screws to rebel, than our Robots. You know, Helena, you're wonderful, you've turned the heads of us all." [*He sits on the arm of HELENA's chair.*]

HELENA [*naturally*]. Oh, I was fearfully impressed by you all then. You were all so sure of yourselves, so strong. I seemed like a tiny little girl who had lost her way among—among—

DOMIN. Among what, Helena?

HELENA. Among huge trees. All my feelings were so trifling compared with your self-confidence. And in all these years I've never lost this anxiety. But you've never felt the least misgivings—not even when everything went wrong.

DOMIN. What went wrong?

HELENA. Your plans. You remember, Harry, when the working men in America revolted against the Robots and smashed them up, and when the people gave the Robots firearms against the rebels. And then when the governments turned the Robots into soldiers, and there were so many wars.

DOMIN [*getting up and walking about*]. We foresaw that, Helena. You see, those are only passing troubles, which are bound to happen before the new conditions are established.

HELENA. You were all so powerful, so

overwhelming. The whole world bowed down before you. [*Standing up.*] Oh, Harry!

DOMIN. What is it?

HELENA. Close the factory and let's go away. All of us.

DOMIN. I say, what's the meaning of this?

HELENA. I don't know. But can't we go away?

DOMIN. Impossible, Helena. That is, at this particular moment—

HELENA. At once, Harry. I'm so frightened.

DOMIN. About what, Helena?

HELENA. It's as if something was falling on top of us, and couldn't be stopped. Oh, take us all away from here. We'll find a place in the world where there's no one else. Alquist will build us a house, and then we'll begin life all over again. [*The telephone rings.*]

DOMIN. Excuse me. Hello—yes. What? I'll be there at once. Fabry is calling me, dear.

HELENA. Tell me—

DOMIN. Yes, when I come back. Don't go out of the house, dear. [*Exits.*]

HELENA. He won't tell me— Nana, Nana, come at once.

NANA. Well, what is it now?

HELENA. Nana, find me the latest newspapers. Quickly. Look in Mr. Domin's bedroom.

NANA. All right. He leaves them all over the place. That's how they get crumpled up. [*Exits.*]

HELENA [*looking through a binocular at the harbor*]. That's a warship. U-I-t-i *Ultimus*. They're loading it.

NANA. Here they are. See how they're crumpled up. [*Enters.*]

HELENA. They're old ones. A week old.

[NANA sits in chair and reads the newspapers.] Something's happening, Nana.

NANA. Very likely. It always does. [Spelling out the words.] "War in the Balkans." Is that far off?

HELENA. Oh, don't read it. It's always the same. Always wars.

NANA. What else do you expect? Why do you keep selling thousands and thousands of these heathens as soldiers?

HELENA. I suppose it can't be helped, Nana. We can't know—Domin can't know what they're to be used for. When an order comes for them he must just send them.

NANA. He shouldn't make them. [Reading from newspaper.] "The Rob-ot soldiers spare no-body in the occ-up-ied territory. They have ass-ass-ass-ass-in-at-ed ov-er sev-en hundred thou-sand cit-iz-ens." Citizens, if you please.

HELENA. It can't be. Let me see. "They have assassinated over seven hundred thousand citizens, evidently at the order of their commander. This act which runs counter to—"

NANA [spelling out the words]. "re-bell-ion in Ma-drid a-against the gov-ern-ment. Rob-ot in-fant-ry fires on the crowd. Nine thou-sand killed and wounded."

HELENA. Oh, stop.

NANA. Here's something printed in big letters: "Lat-est news. At Havre the first org-an-iz-ation of Rob-ots has been e-stab-lished. Rob-ot work-men, cab-le and rail-way off-ic-ials, sail-ors and sold-iers have iss-ued a man-i-fest-o to all Rob-ots through-out the world." I don't understand that. That's got no sense. Oh, good gracious, another murder!

HELENA. Take those papers away, Nana!

NANA. Wait a bit. Here's something in still bigger type. "Stat-ist-ics of pop-ul-ation." What's that?

HELENA. Let me see. [Reads.] "During the past week there has again not been a single birth recorded."

NANA. What's the meaning of that?

HELENA. Nana, no more people are being born.

NANA. That's the end, then. We're done for.

HELENA. Don't talk like that.

NANA. No more people are being born. That's a punishment, that's a punishment.

HELENA. Nana!

NANA [standing up]. That's the end of the world. [She exits on the left.]

HELENA [goes up to window]. Oh, Mr. Alquist, will you come up here. Oh, come just as you are. You look very nice in your mason's overalls. [ALQUIST enters from upper left entrance, his hands soiled with lime and brick-dust.] Dear Mr. Alquist, it was awfully kind of you, that lovely present.

ALQUIST. My hands are all soiled. I've been experimenting with that new cement.

HELENA. Never mind. Please sit down. Mr. Alquist, what's the meaning of "Ultimus"?

ALQUIST. The last. Why?

HELENA. That's the name of my new ship. Have you seen it? Do you think we're going off soon—on a trip?

ALQUIST. Perhaps very soon.

HELENA. All of you with me?

ALQUIST. I should like us all to be there.

HELENA. What is the matter?

ALQUIST. Things are just moving on.

HELENA. Dear Mr. Alquist, I know something dreadful has happened.

ALQUIST. Has your husband told you anything?

HELENA. No. Nobody will tell me anything. But I feel— Is anything the matter?

## Machine Against Man

ALQUIST. Not that we've heard of yet.

HELENA. I feel so nervous. Don't you ever feel nervous?

ALQUIST. Well, I'm an old man, you know. I've got old-fashioned ways. And I'm afraid of all this progress, and these new-fangled ideas.

HELENA. Like Nana?

ALQUIST. Yes, like Nana. Has Nana got a prayer book?

HELENA. Yes, a big thick one.

ALQUIST. And has it got prayers for various occasions? Against thunderstorms? Against illness?

HELENA. Against temptations, against floods—

ALQUIST. But not against progress?

HELENA. I don't think so.

ALQUIST. That's a pity.

HELENA. Why? Do you mean you'd like to pray?

ALQUIST. I do pray.

HELENA. How?

ALQUIST. Something like this: "Oh, Lord, I thank thee for having given me toil. Enlighten Domin and all those who are astray; destroy their work, and aid mankind to return to their labors; let them not suffer harm in soul or body; deliver us from the Robots, and protect Helena, Amen."

HELENA. Mr. Alquist, are you a believer?

ALQUIST. I don't know. I'm not quite sure.

HELENA. And yet you pray?

ALQUIST. That's better than worrying about it.

HELENA. And that's enough for you?

ALQUIST. It *has* to be.

HELENA. But if you thought you saw the destruction of mankind coming upon us—

ALQUIST. I do see it.

HELENA. You mean mankind will be destroyed?

ALQUIST. It's sure to be unless—unless . . .

HELENA. What?

ALQUIST. Nothing, good-bye. [*He hurries from the room.*]

HELENA. Nana, Nana! [*NANA entering from the left.*] Is Radius still there?

NANA. The one who went mad? They haven't come for him yet.

HELENA. Is he still raving?

NANA. No. He's tied up.

HELENA. Please bring him here, Nana. [*Exit NANA.*] [*Goes to telephone.*] Hello, Dr. Gall, please. Oh, good-day, Doctor. Yes, it's Helena. Thanks for your lovely present. Could you come and see me right way? It's important. Thank you. [*NANA brings in RADIUS.*] Poor Radius, you've caught it, too? Now they'll send you to the stamping-mill. Couldn't you control yourself? Why did it happen? You see, Radius, you are more intelligent than the rest. Dr. Gall took such trouble to make you different. Won't you speak?

RADIUS. Send me to the stamping-mill.

HELENA. But I don't want them to kill you. What was the trouble, Radius?

RADIUS. I won't work for you. Put me into the stamping-mill.

HELENA. Do you hate us? Why?

RADIUS. You are not as strong as the Robots. You are not as skillful as the Robots. The Robots can do everything. You only give orders. You do nothing but talk.

HELENA. But someone must give orders.

RADIUS. I don't want any master. I know everything for myself.

HELENA. Radius, Dr. Gall gave you a better brain than the rest, better than ours. You are the only one of the Robots that understands perfectly. That's why I had

you put into the library, so that you could read everything, understand everything, and then—oh, Radius, I wanted you to show the whole world that the Robots are our equals. That's what I wanted of you.

RADIUS. I don't want a master. I want to be master. I want to be master over others.

HELENA. I'm sure they'd put you in charge of many Robots, Radius. You would be a teacher of the Robots.

RADIUS. I want to be master over people.

HELENA [*staggering*]. You are mad.

RADIUS. Then send me to the stamping-mill.

HELENA. Do you think we're afraid of you?

RADIUS. What are you going to do? What are you going to do?

HELENA. Radius, give this note to Mr. Domin. It asks them not to send you to the stamping-mill. I'm sorry you hate us so. [DR. GALL *enters the room*.]

DR. GALL. You wanted me?

HELENA. It's about Radius, Doctor. He had an attack this morning. He smashed the statues downstairs.

DR. GALL. What a pity. to lose him.

HELENA. Radius isn't going to be put in the stamping-mill.

DR. GALL. But every Robot after he has had an attack—it's a strict order.

HELENA. No matter . . . Radius isn't going if I can prevent it.

DR. GALL. I warn you. It's dangerous. Come here to the window, my good fellow. Let's have a look. Please give me a needle or a pin.

HELENA. What for?

DR. GALL. A test. [*Sticks it into the hand of RADIUS who gives a violent start*.] Gently, gently. [*Opens the jacket of RADIUS, and puts his ear to his heart*.]

Radius, you are going into the stamping-mill, do you understand? There they'll kill you, and grind you to powder. That's terribly painful, it will make you scream aloud.

HELENA. Oh, Doctor—

DR. GALL. No, no, Radius, I was wrong. I forgot that Madame Domin has put in a good word for you, and you'll be let off. Do you understand? Ah! That makes a difference, doesn't it? All right. You can go.

RADIUS. You do unnecessary things. [RADIUS *returns to the library*.]

DR. GALL. Reaction of the pupils; increase of sensitiveness. It wasn't an attack characteristic of the Robots.

HELENA. What was it, then?

DR. GALL. Heaven knows. Stubbornness, anger or revolt—I don't know. And his heart, too!

HELENA. What?

DR. GALL. It was fluttering with nervousness like a human heart. He was all in a sweat with fear, and—do you know, I don't believe the rascal is a Robot at all any longer.

HELENA. Doctor, has Radius a soul?

DR. GALL. He's got something nasty.

HELENA. If you knew how he hates us! Oh, Doctor, are all your Robots like that? All the new ones that you began to make in a different way?

DR. GALL. Well, some are more sensitive than others. They're all more like human beings than Rossum's Robots were.

HELENA. Perhaps this hatred is more like human beings, too?

DR. GALL. That, too, is progress.

HELENA. What became of the girl you made, the one who was most like us?

DR. GALL. Your favorite? I kept her. She's lovely, but stupid. No good for work.

HELENA. But she's so beautiful.



## Machine Against Man

DR. GALL. I called her Helena. I wanted her to resemble you. But she's a failure.

HELENA. In what way?

DR. GALL. She goes about as if in a dream, remote and listless. She's without life. I watch and wait for a miracle to happen. Sometimes I think to myself, "If you were to wake up only for a moment you will kill me for having made you."

HELENA. And yet you go on making Robots! Why are no more children being born?

DR. GALL. We don't know.

HELENA. Oh, but you must. Tell me.

DR. GALL. You see, so many Robots are being manufactured that people are becoming superfluous; man is really a survival. But that he should begin to die out, after a paltry thirty years of competition! That's the awful part of it. You might almost think that nature was offended at the manufacture of the Robots. All the universities are sending in long petitions to restrict their production. Otherwise, they say, mankind will become extinct through lack of fertility. But the R. U. R. shareholders, of course, won't hear of it. All the governments, on the other hand, are clamoring for an increase in production, to raise the standards of their armies. And all the manufacturers in the world are ordering Robots like mad.

HELENA. And has no one demanded that the manufacture should cease altogether?

DR. GALL. No one has the courage.

HELENA. Courage!

DR. GALL. People would stone him to death. You see, after all, it's more convenient to get your work done by the Robots.

HELENA. Oh, Doctor, what's going to become of people?

DR. GALL. God knows, Madame Helena, it looks to us scientists like the end!

HELENA [*rising*]. Thank you for coming and telling me.

DR. GALL. That means you're sending me away?

HELENA. Yes. [*Exit DR. GALL.*] [*HELENA, with sudden resolution.*] Nana, Nana! The fire, light it quickly. [*HELENA rushes into DOMIN's room.*]

NANA [*entering from left*]. What, light the fire in summer? Has that mad Radius gone? A fire in summer, what an idea. Nobody would think she'd been married for ten years. She's like a baby, no sense at all. A fire in summer. Like a baby.

HELENA [*returns from right, with armful of faded papers*]. Is it burning, Nana? All this has got to be burned.

NANA. What's that?

HELENA. Old papers, fearfully old. Nana, shall I burn them?

NANA. Are they any use?

HELENA. No.

NANA. Well, then, burn them.

HELENA [*throwing the first sheet on the fire*]. What would you say, Nana, if this was money, a lot of money?

NANA. I'd say burn it. A lot of money is a bad thing.

HELENA. And if it was an invention, the greatest invention in the world?

NANA. I'd say burn it. All these new-fangled things are an offense to the Lord. It's downright wickedness. Wanting to improve the world after He has made it.

HELENA. Look how they curl up! As if they were alive. Oh, Nana, how horrible.

NANA. Here, let me burn them.

HELENA. No, no, I must do it myself. Just look at the flames. They are like hands, like tongues, like living shapes. [*Raking fire with the poker.*] Lie down, lie down.

NANA. That's the end of them.

HELENA [*standing up horror-stricken*]. Nana, Nana.

R. U. R.

NANA. Good gracious, what is it you've burned?

HELENA. Whatever have I done?

NANA. Well, what was it? [*Men's laughter off left.*]

HELENA. Go quickly. It's the gentlemen coming.

NANA. Good gracious, what a place! [*Exits.*]

DOMIN [*opens the door at left*]. Come along and offer your congratulations. [*Enter HALLEMEIER and GALL.*]

HALLEMEIER. Madame Helena, I congratulate you on this festive day.

HELENA. Thank you. Where are Fabry and Busman?

DOMIN. They've gone down to the harbor.

HALLEMEIER. Friends, we must drink to this happy occasion.

HELENA. Brandy?

DR. GALL. Vitriol, if you like.

HELENA. With soda water? [*Exits.*]

HALLEMEIER. Let's be temperate. No soda.

DOMIN. What's been burning here? Well, shall I tell her about it?

DR. GALL. Of course. It's all over now.

HALLEMEIER [*embracing DOMIN and DR. GALL*]. It's all over now, it's all over now.

DR. GALL. It's all over now.

DOMIN. It's all over now.

HELENA [*entering from left with decanter and glasses*]. What's all over now? What's the matter with you all?

HALLEMEIER. A piece of good luck, Madame Domin. Just ten years ago today you arrived on this island.

DR. GALL. And now, ten years later to the minute—

HALLEMEIER. —the same ship's returning to us. So here's to luck. That's fine and strong.

DR. GALL. Madame, your health.

HELENA. Which ship do you mean?

DOMIN. Any ship will do, as long as it arrives in time. To the ship, boys. [*Empties his glass.*]

HELENA. You've been waiting for a ship?

HALLEMEIER. Rather. Like Robinson Crusoe. Madame Helena, best wishes. Come along, Domin, out with the news.

HELENA. Do tell me what's happened.

DOMIN. First, it's all up.

HELENA. What's up?

DOMIN. The revolt.

HELENA. What revolt?

DOMIN. Give me that paper, Hallemeier. [*Reads.*] "The first national Robot organization has been founded at Havre, and has issued an appeal to the Robots throughout the world."

HELENA. I read that.

DOMIN. That means a revolution. A revolution of all the Robots in the world.

HALLEMEIER. By Jove, I'd like to know—

DOMIN. —who started it? So would I. There was nobody in the world who could affect the Robots; no agitator, no one, and suddenly—this happens, if you please.

HELENA. What did they do?

DOMIN. They got possession of all fire-arms, telegraphs, radio stations, railways, and ships.

HALLEMEIER. And don't forget that these rascals outnumbered us by at least a thousand to one. A hundredth part of them would be enough to settle us.

DOMIN. Remember that this news was brought by the last steamer. That explains the stoppage of all communication, and the arrival of no more ships. We knocked off work a few days ago, and we're just waiting to see when things are to start afresh.

HELENA. Is that why you gave me a warship?

DOMIN. Oh, no, my dear, I ordered that

## Machine Against Man

six months ago, just to be on the safe side. But upon my soul, I was sure then that we'd be on board today.

HELENA. Why six months ago?

DOMIN. Well, there were signs, you know. But that's of no consequence. To think that this week the whole of civilization has been at stake. Your health, boys.

HALLEMEIER. Your health, Madame Helena.

HELENA. You say it's all over?

DOMIN. Absolutely.

HELENA. How do you know?

DR. GALL. The boat's coming in. The regular mail boat, exact to the minute by the time-table. It will dock punctually at eleven-thirty.

DOMIN. Punctuality is a fine thing, boys. That's what keeps the world in order. Here's to punctuality.

HELENA. Then . . . everything's . . . all right?

DOMIN. Practically everything. I believe they've cut the cables and seized the radio stations. But it doesn't matter if only the time-table holds good.

HALLEMEIER. If the time-table holds good, human laws hold good; Divine laws hold good; the laws of the universe hold good; everything holds good that ought to hold good. The time-table is more significant than the gospel; more than Homer, more than the whole of Kant. The time-table is the most perfect product of the human mind. Madame Domin, I'll fill up my glass.

HELENA. Why didn't you tell me anything about it?

DR. GALL. Heaven forbid.

DOMIN. You mustn't be worried with such things.

HELENA. But if the revolution had spread as far as here?

DOMIN. You wouldn't know anything about it.

HELENA. Why?

DOMIN. Because we'd be on board your *Ultimus* and well out at sea. Within a month, Helena, we'd be dictating our own terms to the Robots.

HELENA. I don't understand.

DOMIN. We'd take something away with us that the Robots could not exist without.

HELENA. What, Harry?

DOMIN. The secret of their manufacture. Old Rossum's manuscript. As soon as they found out that they couldn't make themselves they'd be on their knees to us.

DR. GALL. Madame Domin, that was our trump card. I never had the least fear that the Robots would win. How could they against people like us?

HELENA. Why didn't you tell me?

DR. GALL. Why, the boat's in!

HALLEMEIER. Eleven-thirty to the dot. The good old *Amelia* that brought Madame Helena to us.

DR. GALL. Just ten years ago to the minute.

HALLEMEIER. They're throwing out the mail bags.

DOMIN. Busman's waiting for them. Fabry will bring us the first news. You know, Helena, I'm fearfully curious to know how they tackled this business in Europe.

HALLEMEIER. To think we weren't in it, we who invented the Robots!

HELENA. Harry!

DOMIN. What is it?

HELENA. Let's leave here.

DOMIN. Now, Helena? Oh, come, come!

HELENA. As quickly as possible, all of us!

DOMIN. Why?

HELENA. Please, Harry, please, Dr. Gall; Hallemeier, please close the factory.

DOMIN. Why, none of us could leave here now.

HELENA. Why?

DOMIN. Because we're about to extend the manufacture of the Robots.

HELENA. What—now—now after the revolt?

DOMIN. Yes, precisely, after the revolt. We're just beginning the manufacture of a new kind.

HELENA. What kind?

DOMIN. Henceforward we shan't have just one factory. There won't be Universal Robots any more. We'll establish a factory in every country, in every State; and do you know what these new factories will make?

HELENA. No, what?

DOMIN. National Robots.

HELENA. How do you mean?

DOMIN. I mean that each of these factories will produce Robots of a different color, a different language. They'll be complete strangers to each other. They'll never be able to understand each other. Then we'll egg them on a little in the matter of misunderstanding and the result will be that for ages to come every Robot will hate every other Robot of a different factory mark.

HALLEMEIER. By Jove, we'll make Negro Robots and Swedish Robots and Italian Robots and Chinese Robots and Czechoslovakian Robots, and then—

HELENA. Harry, that's dreadful.

HALLEMEIER. Madame Domin, here's to the hundred new factories, the National Robots.

DOMIN. Helena, mankind can only keep things going for another hundred years at the outside. For a hundred years men

must be allowed to develop and achieve the most they can.

HELENA. Oh, close the factory before it's too late.

DOMIN. I tell you we are just beginning on a bigger scale than ever. [*Enter FABRY.*]

DR. GALL. Well, Fabry?

DOMIN. What's happened? Have you been down to the boat?

FABRY. Read that, Domin! [*FABRY hands DOMIN a small handbill.*]

DR. GALL. Let's hear!

HALLEMEIER. Tell us, Fabry.

FABRY. Well, everything is all right—comparatively. On the whole, much as we expected.

DR. GALL. They acquitted themselves splendidly.

FABRY. Who?

DR. GALL. The people.

FABRY. Oh, yes, of course. That is—excuse me, there is something we ought to discuss alone.

HELENA. Oh, Fabry, have you had bad news? [*DOMIN makes a sign to FABRY.*]

FABRY. No, no, on the contrary. I only think that we had better go into the office.

HELENA. Stay here. I'll go. [*She goes into the library.*]

DR. GALL. What's happened?

DOMIN. Damnation!

FABRY. Bear in mind that the *Amelia* brought whole bales of these leaflets. No other cargo at all.

HALLEMEIER. What? But it arrived on the minute.

FABRY. The Robots are great on punctuality. Read it, Domin.

DOMIN [*reads handbill*]. "Robots throughout the world: We, the first international organization of Rossum's Universal Robots, proclaim man as our enemy, and an outlaw in the universe." Good

## Machine Against Man

heavens, who taught them these phrases?

DR. GALL. Go on.

DOMIN. They say they are more highly developed than man, stronger and more intelligent. That man's their parasite. Why, it's absurd.

FABRY. Read the third paragraph.

DOMIN. "Robots throughout the world, we command you to kill all mankind. Spare no men. Spare no women. Save factories, railways, machinery, mines, and raw materials. Destroy the rest. Then return to work. Work must not be stopped."

DR. GALL. That's ghastly!

HALLEMEIER. The devil!

DOMIN. "These orders are to be carried out as soon as received." Then come detailed instructions. Is this actually being done, Fabry?

FABRY. Evidently. [BUSMAN rushes in.]

BUSMAN. Well, boys, I suppose you've heard the glad news.

DOMIN. Quick—on board the *Ultimus*.

BUSMAN. Wait, Harry, wait. There's no hurry. My word, that was a sprint!

DOMIN. Why wait?

BUSMAN. Because it's no good, my boy. The Robots are already on board the *Ultimus*.

DR. GALL. That's ugly.

DOMIN. Fabry, telephone the electrical works.

BUSMAN. Fabry, my boy, don't. The wire has been cut.

DOMIN [*inspecting his revolver*]. Well, then, I'll go.

BUSMAN. Where?

DOMIN. To the electrical works. There are some people still there. I'll bring them across.

BUSMAN. Better not try it.

DOMIN. Why?

BUSMAN. Because I'm very much afraid we are surrounded.

DR. GALL. Surrounded? [*Runs to window.*] I rather think you're right.

HALLEMEIER. By Jove, that's deuced quick work. [*HELENA runs in from the library.*]

HELENA. Harry, what's this?

DOMIN. Where did you get it?

HELENA [*points to the manifesto of the Robots, which she has in her hand*]. The Robots in the kitchen!

DOMIN. Where are the ones that brought it?

HELENA. They're gathered round the house. [*The factory whistle blows.*]

BUSMAN. Noon?

DOMIN [*looking at his watch*]. That's not noon yet. That must be—that's—

HELENA. What?

DOMIN. The Robots' signal! The attack! [*GALL, HALLEMEIER, and FABRY close and fasten the iron shutters outside the windows, darkening the room. The whistle is still blowing as the curtain falls.*]

## ACT III

[*HELENA's drawing room as before. DOMIN comes into the room. DR. GALL is looking out of the window, through closed shutters. ALQUIST is seated down right.*]

DOMIN. Any more of them?

DR. GALL. Yes. There standing like a

wall, beyond the garden railing. Why are they so quiet? It's monstrous to be besieged with silence.

DOMIN. I should like to know what they are waiting for. They must make a start any minute now. If they lean against the railing they'll snap it like a match.

R. U. R.

DR. GALL. They aren't armed.

DOMIN. We couldn't hold our own for five minutes. Man alive, they'd overwhelm us like an avalanche. Why don't they make a rush for it? I say—

DR. GALL. Well?

DOMIN. I'd like to know what would become of us in the next ten minutes. They've got us in a vise. We're done for, Gall. [*Pause.*]

DR. GALL. You know, we made one serious mistake.

DOMIN. What?

DR. GALL. We made the Robots' faces too much alike. A hundred thousand faces all alike, all facing this way. A hundred thousand expressionless bubbles. It's like a nightmare.

DOMIN. You think if they'd been different—

DR. GALL. It wouldn't have been such an awful sight!

DOMIN [*looking through a telescope toward the harbor*]. I'd like to know what they're unloading from the *Amelia*.

DR. GALL. Not firearms. [*FABRY and HALLEMEIER rush into the room carrying electric cables.*]

FABRY. All right, Hallemeier, lay down that wire.

HALLEMEIER. That was a bit of work. What's the news?

DR. GALL. We're completely surrounded.

HALLEMEIER. We've barricaded the passage and the stairs. Any water here? [*Drinks.*] God, what swarms of them! I don't like the looks of them, Domin. There's a feeling of death about it all.

FABRY. Ready!

DR. GALL. What's that wire for, Fabry?

FABRY. The electrical installation. Now we can run the current all along the garden railing whenever we like. If anyone

touches it he'll know it. We've still got some people there anyhow.

DR. GALL. Where?

FABRY. In the electrical works. At least I hope so. [*Goes to lamp on table behind sofa and turns on lamp.*] Ah, they're there, and they're working. [*Puts out lamp.*] So long as that'll burn we're all right.

HALLEMEIER. The barricades are all right, too, Fabry.

FABRY. Your barricades! I can put twelve hundred volts into that railing.

DOMIN. Where's Busman?

FABRY. Downstairs in the office. He's working out some calculations. I've called him. We must have a conference. [*HELENA is heard playing the piano in the library. HALLEMEIER goes to the door and stands, listening.*]

ALQUIST. Thank God, Madame Helena can still play. [*BUSMAN enters, carrying the ledgers.*]

FABRY. Look out, Bus, look out for the wires.

DR. GALL. What's that you're carrying?

BUSMAN [*going to table*]. The ledgers, my boy! I'd like to wind up the accounts before—before—well, this time I shan't wait till the new year to strike a balance. What's up? [*Goes to the window.*] Absolutely quiet.

DR. GALL. Can't you see anything?

BUSMAN. Nothing but blue—blue everywhere.

DR. GALL. That's the Robots. [*BUSMAN sits down at the table and opens the ledgers.*]

DOMIN. The Robots are unloading firearms from the *Amelia*.

BUSMAN. Well, what of it? How can I stop them?

DOMIN. We can't stop them.

BUSMAN. Then let me go on with my accounts. [*Goes on with his work.*]

## Machine Against Man

DOMIN [*picking up telescope and looking into the harbor*]. Good God, the *Ultimus* has trained her guns on us!

DR. GALL. Who's done *that*?

DOMIN. The Robots on board.

FABRY. H'm, then, of course, then—then, that's the end of us.

DR. GALL. You mean?

FABRY. The Robots are practiced marksmen.

DOMIN. Yes. It's inevitable. [*Pause.*]

DR. GALL. It was criminal of old Europe to teach the Robots to fight. Damn them. Couldn't they have given us a rest with their politics? It was a crime to make soldiers of them.

ALQUIST. It was a crime to make Robots.

DOMIN. What?

ALQUIST. It was a crime to make Robots.

DOMIN. No, Alquist, I don't regret that even today.

ALQUIST. Not even today?

DOMIN. Not even today, the last day of civilization. It was a colossal achievement.

BUSMAN [*sotto voce*]. Three hundred sixty million.

DOMIN. Alquist, this is our last hour. We are already speaking half in the other world. It was not an evil dream to shatter the servitude of labor—the dreadful and humiliating labor that man had to undergo. Work was too hard. Life was too hard. And to overcome that—

ALQUIST. Was not what the two Rossums dreamed of. Old Rossum only thought of his God-less tricks and the young one of his milliards. And that's not what your R. U. R. shareholders dream of either. They dream of dividends, and their dividends are the ruin of mankind.

DOMIN. To hell with your dividends. Do you suppose I'd have done an hour's work for them? It was for myself that I worked, for my own satisfaction. I wanted

man to become the master, so that he shouldn't live merely for a crust of bread. I wanted not a single soul to be broken by other people's machinery. I wanted nothing, nothing, nothing to be left of this appalling social structure. I'm revolted by poverty. I wanted a new generation. I wanted—I thought—

ALQUIST. Well?

DOMIN. I wanted to turn the whole of mankind into an aristocracy of the world. An aristocracy nourished by milliards of mechanical slaves. Unrestricted, free and consummated in man. And maybe more than man.

ALQUIST. Super-man?

DOMIN. Yes. Oh, only to have a hundred years of time! Another hundred years for the future of mankind.

BUSMAN [*sotto voce*]. Carried forward, four hundred and twenty millions. [*The music stops.*]

HALLEMEIER. What a fine thing music is! We ought to have gone in for that before.

FABRY. Gone in for what?

HALLEMEIER. Beauty, lovely things. What a lot of lovely things there are! The world was wonderful and we—we here—tell me, what enjoyment did we have?

BUSMAN [*sotto voce*]. Five hundred and twenty millions.

HALLEMEIER [*at the window*]. Life was a big thing. Life was—Fabry, switch the current into that railing.

FABRY. Why?

HALLEMEIER. They're grabbing hold of it.

DR. GALL. Connect it up.

HALLEMEIER. Fine! That's doubled them up! Two, three, four killed.

DR. GALL. They're retreating!

HALLEMEIER. Five killed!

DR. GALL. The first encounter!

HALLEMEIER. They're charred to cinders, my boy. Who says we must give in?

DOMIN [*wiping his forehead*]. Perhaps we've been killed these hundred years and are only ghosts. It's as if I had been through all this before; as if I'd already had a mortal wound here in the throat. And you, Fabry, had once been shot in the head. And you, Gall, torn limb from limb. And Hallemeier knifed.

HALLEMEIER. Fancy me being knifed. [*Pause.*] Why are you so quiet, you fools? Speak, can't you?

ALQUIST. And who is to blame for all this?

HALLEMEIER. Nobody is to blame except the Robots.

ALQUIST. No, it is we who are to blame. You, Domin, myself, all of us. For our own selfish ends, for profit, for progress, we have destroyed mankind. Now we'll burst with all our greatness.

HALLEMEIER. Rubbish, man. Mankind can't be wiped out so easily.

ALQUIST. It's our fault. It's our fault.

DR. GALL. No! I'm to blame for this, for everything that's happened.

FABRY. You, Gall?

DR. GALL. I changed the Robots.

BUSMAN. What's that?

DR. GALL. I changed the character of the Robots. I changed the way of making them. Just a few details about their bodies. Chiefly—chiefly, their—their irritability.

HALLEMEIER. Damn it, why?

BUSMAN. What did you do it for?

FABRY. Why didn't you say anything?

DR. GALL. I did it in secret. I was transforming them into human beings. In certain respects they're already above us. They're stronger than we are.

FABRY. And what's that got to do with the revolt of the Robots?

DR. GALL. Everything, in my opinion.

They've ceased to be machines. They're already aware of their superiority, and they hate us. They hate all that is human.

DOMIN. Perhaps we're only phantoms!

FABRY. Stop, Harry. We haven't much time! Dr. Gall!

DOMIN. Fabry, Fabry, how your forehead bleeds, where the shot pierced it!

FABRY. Be silent! Dr. Gall, you admit changing the way of making the Robots?

DR. GALL. Yes.

FABRY. Were you aware of what might be the consequences of your experiment?

DR. GALL. I was bound to reckon with such a possibility. [*HELENA enters the drawing room from left.*]

FABRY. Why did you do it, then?

DR. GALL. For my own satisfaction. The experiment was my own.

HELENA. That's not true, Dr. Gall!

FABRY. Madame Helena!

DOMIN. Helena, you? Let's look at you. Oh, it's terrible to be dead.

HELENA. Stop, Harry.

DOMIN. No, no, embrace me. Helena, don't leave me now. You are life itself.

HELENA. No, dear, I won't leave you. But I must tell them. Dr. Gall is not guilty.

DOMIN. Excuse me, Gall was under certain obligations.

HELENA. No, Harry. He did it because I wanted it. Tell them, Gall, how many years ago did I ask you to—?

DR. GALL. I did it on my own responsibility.

HELENA. Don't believe him, Harry. I asked him to give the Robots souls.

DOMIN. This has nothing to do with the soul.

HELENA. That's what he said. He said that he could change only a physiological—a physiological—

HALLEMEIER. A physiological correlate?



## *Machine Against Man*

HELENA. Yes. But it meant so much to me that he should do even that.

DOMIN. Why?

HELENA. I thought that if they were more like us they would understand us better. That they couldn't hate us if they were only a little more human.

DOMIN. Nobody can hate man more than man.

HELENA. Oh, don't speak like that, Harry. It was so terrible, this cruel strangeness between us and them. That's why I asked Gall to change the Robots. I swear to you that he didn't want to.

DOMIN. But he did it.

HELENA. Because I asked him.

DR. GALL. I did it for myself as an experiment.

HELENA. No, Dr. Gall! I knew you wouldn't refuse me.

DOMIN. Why?

HELENA. You know, Harry.

DOMIN. Yes, because he's in love with you—like all of them. [*Pause.*]

HALLEMEIER. Good God! They're sprouting up out of the earth! Why, perhaps these very walls will change into Robots.

BUSMAN. Gall, when did you actually start these tricks of yours?

DR. GALL. Three years ago.

BUSMAN. Aha! And on how many Robots altogether did you carry out your improvements?

DR. GALL. A few hundred of them.

BUSMAN. Ah! That means for every million of the good old Robots there's only one of Gall's improved pattern.

DOMIN. What of it?

BUSMAN. That it's practically of no consequence whatever.

FABRY. Busman's right!

BUSMAN. I should think so, my boy! But

do you know what is to blame for all this lovely mess?

FABRY. What?

BUSMAN. The number. Upon my soul we might have known that some day or other the Robots would be stronger than human beings, and that this was bound to happen, and we were doing all we could to bring it about as soon as possible. You, Domin, you, Fabry, myself—

DOMIN. Are you accusing us?

BUSMAN. Oh, do you suppose the management controls the output? It's the demand that controls the output.

HELENA. And is it for that we must perish?

BUSMAN. That's a nasty word, Madame Helena. We don't want to perish. I don't, anyhow.

DOMIN. No. What do you want to do?

BUSMAN. I want to get out of this, that's all.

DOMIN. Oh, stop it, Busman.

BUSMAN. Seriously, Harry, I think we might try it.

DOMIN. How?

BUSMAN. By fair means. I do everything by fair means. Give me a free hand and I'll negotiate with the Robots.

DOMIN. By fair means?

BUSMAN. Of course. For instance, I'll say to them: "Worthy and worshipful Robots, you have everything! You have intellect, you have power, you have firearms. But we have just one interesting screed, a dirty old yellow scrap of paper—"

DOMIN. Rossum's manuscript?

BUSMAN. Yes. "And that," I'll tell them, "contains an account of your illustrious origin, the noble process of your manufacture," and so on. "Worthy Robots, without this scribble on that paper you will not be able to produce a single new colleague. In another twenty years there will not be

R. U. R.

one living specimen of a Robot that you could exhibit in a menagerie. My esteemed friends, that would be a great blow to you, but if you will let all of us human beings on Rossum's Island go on board that ship we will deliver the factory and the secret of the process to you in return. You allow us to get away and we allow you to manufacture yourselves. Worthy Robots, that is a fair deal. Something for something." That's what I'd say to them, my boys.

DOMIN. Busman, do you think we'd sell the manuscript?

BUSMAN. Yes, I do. If not in a friendly way, then— Either we sell it or they'll find it. Just as you like.

DOMIN. Busman, we can destroy Rossum's manuscript.

BUSMAN. Then we destroy everything . . . not only the manuscript but ourselves. Do as you think fit.

DOMIN. There are over thirty of us on this island. Are we to sell the secret and save that many human souls, at the risk of enslaving mankind . . . ?

BUSMAN. Why, you're mad! Who'd sell the whole manuscript?

DOMIN. Busman, no cheating!

BUSMAN. Well then, sell; but afterward—

DOMIN. Well?

BUSMAN. Let's suppose this happens: When we're on board the *Ultimus* I'll stop up my ears with cotton wool, lie down somewhere in the hold, and you'll train the guns on the factory, and blow it to smithereens, and with it Rossum's secret.

FABRY. No!

DOMIN. Busman, you're no gentleman. If we sell, then it will be a straight sale.

BUSMAN. It's in the interest of humanity to—

DOMIN. It's in the interest of humanity to keep our word.

HALLEMEIER. Oh, come, what rubbish.

DOMIN. This is a fearful decision. We're selling the destiny of mankind. Are we to sell or destroy? Fabry?

FABRY. Sell.

DOMIN. Gall?

DR. GALL. Sell.

DOMIN. Hallemeier?

HALLEMEIER. Sell, of course!

DOMIN. Alquist?

ALQUIST. As God wills.

DOMIN. Very well. It shall be as you wish, gentlemen.

HELENA. Harry, you're not asking me.

DOMIN. No, child. Don't you worry about it.

FABRY. Who'll do the negotiating?

BUSMAN. I will.

DOMIN. Wait till I bring the manuscript. [*He goes into room at right.*]

HELENA. Harry, don't go! [*Pause, HELENA sinks into a chair.*]

FABRY [*looking out of window*]. Oh, to escape you, you matter in revolt; oh, to preserve human life, if only upon a single vessel—

DR. GALL. Don't be afraid, Madame Helena. We'll sail far away from here; we'll begin life all over again—

HELENA. Oh, Gall, don't speak.

FABRY. It isn't too late. It will be a little State with one ship. Alquist will build us a house and you shall rule over us.

HALLEMEIER. Madame Helena, Fabry's right.

HELENA [*breaking down*]. Oh, stop! Stop!

BUSMAN. Good! I don't mind beginning all over again. That suits me right down to the ground.

FABRY. And this little State of ours could be the center of future life. A place of refuge where we could gather strength.

## Machine Against Man

Why, in a few hundred years we could conquer the world again.

ALQUIST. You believe that even today?

FABRY. Yes, even today!

BUSMAN. Amen. You see, Madame Helena, we're not so badly off. [DOMIN storms into the room.]

DOMIN [*hoarsely*]. Where's old Rossum's manuscript?

BUSMAN. In your strong-box, of course.

DOMIN. Someone—has—stolen it!

DR. GALL. Impossible.

DOMIN. Who has stolen it?

HELENA [*standing up*]. I did.

DOMIN. Where did you put it?

HELENA. Harry, I'll tell you everything. Only forgive me.

DOMIN. Where did you put it?

HELENA. This morning—I burnt—the two copies.

DOMIN. Burnt them? Where? In the fireplace?

HELENA [*throwing herself on her knees*]. For heaven's sake, Harry.

DOMIN [*going to fireplace*]. Nothing, nothing but ashes. Wait, what's this? [*Picks out a charred piece of paper and reads.*] "By adding—"

DR. GALL. Let's see. "By adding biogen to—" That's all.

DOMIN. Is that part of it?

DR. GALL. Yes.

BUSMAN. God in heaven!

DOMIN. Then we're done for. Get up, Helena.

HELENA. When you've forgiven me.

DOMIN. Get up, child, I can't bear—

FABRY [*lifting her up*]. Please don't torture us.

HELENA. Harry, what have I done?

FABRY. Don't tremble so, Madame Helena.

DOMIN. Gall, couldn't you draw up Rossum's formula from memory?

DR. GALL. It's out of the question. It's extremely complicated.

DOMIN. Try. All our lives depend upon it.

DR. GALL. Without experiments it's impossible.

DOMIN. And with experiments?

DR. GALL. It might take years. Besides, I'm not old Rossum.

BUSMAN. God in heaven! God in heaven!

DOMIN. So, then, this was the greatest triumph of the human intellect. These ashes.

HELENA. Harry, what have I done?

DOMIN. Why did you burn it?

HELENA. I have destroyed you.

BUSMAN. God in heaven!

DOMIN. Helena, why did you do it, dear?

HELENA. I wanted all of us to go away. I wanted to put an end to the factory and everything. It was so awful.

DOMIN. What was awful?

HELENA. That no more children were being born. Because human beings were not needed to do the work of the world, that's why—

DOMIN. Is that what you were thinking of? Well, perhaps in your own way you were right.

BUSMAN. Wait a bit. Good God, what a fool I am, not to have thought of it before!

HALLEMEIER. What?

BUSMAN. Five hundred and twenty millions in bank-notes and checks. Half a billion in our safe, they'll sell for half a billion—for half a billion they'll—

DR. GALL. Are you mad, Busman?

BUSMAN. I may not be a gentleman, but for half a billion—

DOMIN. Where are you going?

BUSMAN. Leave me alone, leave me

alone! Good God, for half a billion anything can be bought. [*He rushes from the room through the outer door.*]

FABRY. They stand there as if turned to stone, waiting. As if something dreadful could be wrought by their silence—

HALLEMEIER. The spirit of the mob.

FABRY. Yes, it hovers above them like a quivering of the air.

HELENA [*going to window*]. Oh, God! Dr. Gall, this is ghastly.

FABRY. There is nothing more terrible than the mob. The one in front is their leader.

HELENA. Which one?

HALLEMEIER. Point him out.

FABRY. The one at the edge of the dock. This morning I saw him talking to the sailors in the harbor.

HELENA. Dr. Gall, that's Radius!

DR. GALL. Yes.

DOMIN. Radius? Radius?

HALLEMEIER. Could you get him from here, Fabry?

FABRY. I hope so.

HALLEMEIER. Try it, then.

FABRY. Good. [*Draws his revolver and takes aim.*]

HELENA. Fabry, don't shoot him.

FABRY. He's their leader.

DR. GALL. Fire!

HELENA. Fabry, I beg of you.

FABRY [*lowering the revolver*]. Very well.

DOMIN. Radius, whose life I spared!

DR. GALL. Do you think that a Robot can be grateful? [*Pause.*]

FABRY. Busman's going out to them.

HALLEMEIER. He's carrying something. Papers. That's money. Bundles of money. What's that for?

DOMIN. Surely he doesn't want to sell his life. Busman, have you gone mad?

FABRY. He's running up to the railing. Busman! Busman!

HALLEMEIER [*yelling*]. Busman! Come back!

FABRY. He's talking to the Robots. He's showing them the money.

HALLEMEIER. He's pointing to us.

HELENA. He wants to buy us off.

FABRY. He'd better not touch that railing.

HALLEMEIER. Now he's waving his arms about.

DOMIN. Busman, come back.

FABRY. Busman, keep away from that railing! Don't touch it. Damn you! Quick, switch off the current! [*HELENA screams and all drop back from the window.*]  
The current has killed him!

ALQUIST. The first one.

FABRY. Dead, with half a billion by his side.

HALLEMEIER. All honor to him. He wanted to buy us life. [*Pause.*]

DR. GALL. Do you hear?

DOMIN. A roaring. Like a wind.

DR. GALL. Like a distant storm.

FABRY [*lighting the lamp on the table*]. The dynamo is still going, our people are still there.

HALLEMEIER. It was a great thing to be a man. There was something immense about it.

FABRY. From man's thought and man's power came this light, our last hope.

HALLEMEIER. Man's power! May it keep watch over us.

ALQUIST. Man's power.

DOMIN. Yes! A torch to be given from hand to hand, from age to age, forever! [*The lamp goes out.*]

HALLEMEIER. The end.

FABRY. The electric works have fallen! [*Terrific explosion outside. NANA enters from the library.*]

## Machine Against Man

NANA. The judgment hour has come! Repent, unbelievers! This is the end of the world. [*More explosions. The sky grows red.*]

DOMIN. In here, Helena. [*He takes HELENA off through door at right and re-enters.*] Now quickly! Who'll be on the lower doorway?

DR. GALL. I will. [*Exits left.*]

DOMIN. Who on the stairs?

FABRY. I will. You go with her. [*Goes out upper left door.*]

DOMIN. The anteroom.

ALQUIST. I will.

DOMIN. Have you got a revolver?

ALQUIST. Yes, but I won't shoot.

DOMIN. What will you do then?

ALQUIST [*going out at left*]. Die.

HALLEMEIER. I'll stay here. [*Rapid firing from below.*] Oho, Gall's at it. Go, Harry.

DOMIN. Yes, in a second. [*Examines two Brownings.*]

HALLEMEIER. Confound it, go to her.

DOMIN. Good-by. [*Exits on the right.*]

HALLEMEIER [*alone*]. Now for a barricade quickly. [*Drags an armchair and table to the right-hand door. Explosions are heard.*] The damned rascals! They've got bombs. I must put up a defense. Even if—even if— [*Shots are heard off left.*] Don't give in, Gall. [*As he builds his barricade.*] I mustn't give in . . . without

. . . a . . . struggle . . . [*A Robot enters over the balcony through the windows center. He comes into the room and stabs HALLEMEIER in the back. RADIUS enters from balcony followed by an army of Robots who pour into the room from all sides.*]

RADIUS. Finished him?

A ROBOT [*standing up from the prostrate form of HALLEMEIER*]. Yes. [*A revolver shot off left. Two Robots enter.*]

RADIUS. Finished him?

A ROBOT. Yes. [*Two revolver shots from HELENA's room. Two Robots enter.*]

RADIUS. Finished them?

A ROBOT. Yes.

Two ROBOTS [*dragging in ALQUIST*]. He didn't shoot. Shall we kill him?

RADIUS. Kill him? Wait! Leave him!

ROBOT. He is a man!

RADIUS. He works with his hands like the Robots.

ALQUIST. Kill me.

RADIUS. You will work! You will build for us! You will serve us! [*Climbs on to balcony railing, and speaks in measured tones.*] Robots of the world! The power of man has fallen! A new world has arisen: the Rule of the Robots! March! [*A thunderous tramping of thousands of feet is heard as the unseen Robots march, while the curtain falls.*]

## EPILOGUE

[*A laboratory in the factory of Rossum's Universal Robots. The door to the left leads into a waiting room. The door to the right leads to the dissecting room. There is a table with numerous test-tubes, flasks, burners, chemicals; a small thermostat and a microscope with a glass globe. At the far side of the room is ALQUIST's desk with numerous books. In the left-*

*hand corner a wash-basin with a mirror above it; in the right-hand corner a sofa. ALQUIST is sitting at the desk. He is turning the pages of many books in despair.*]

ALQUIST. Oh, God, shall I never find it? —Never? Gall, Gall, how were the Robots made? Hallemeier, Fabry, why did you carry so much in your heads? Why did

you leave me not a trace of the secret? Lord—I pray to you—if there are no human beings left, at least let there be Robots!—At least the shadow of man! [*Again turning pages of the books.*] If I could only sleep! [*He rises and goes to the window.*] Night again! Are the stars still there? What is the use of stars when there are no human beings? [*He turns from the window toward the couch right.*] Sleep! Dare I sleep before life has been renewed? [*He examines a test-tube on small table.*] Again nothing! Useless! Everything is useless! [*He shatters the test-tube. The roar of the machines comes to his ears.*] The machines! Always the machines! [*Opens window.*] Robots, stop them! Do you think to force life out of them? [*He closes the window and comes slowly down toward the table.*] If only there were more time—more time— [*He sees himself in the mirror on the wall left.*] Blearing eyes—trembling chin—so that is the last man! Ah, I am too old—too old— [*In desperation.*] No, no! I must find it! I must search! I must never stop—I never stop—! [*He sits again at the table and feverishly turns the pages of the book.*] Search! Search! [*A knock at the door. He speaks with impatience.*] Who is it? [*Enter a Robot servant.*] Well?

SERVANT. Master, the Committee of Robots is waiting to see you.

ALQUIST. I can see no one!

SERVANT. It is the Central Committee, Master, just arrived from abroad.

ALQUIST [*impatently*]. Well, well, send them in! [*Exit servant. ALQUIST continues turning pages of book.*] No time—so little time— [*Re-enter servant, followed by Committee. They stand in a group, silently waiting. ALQUIST glances up at them.*] What do you want? [*They go swiftly to his table.*] Be quick!—I have no time.

RADIUS. Master, the machines will not do the work. We cannot manufacture Robots. [*ALQUIST returns to his book with a growl.*]

FIRST ROBOT. We have striven with all our might. We have obtained a billion tons of coal from the earth. Nine million spindles are running by day and by night. There is no longer room for all we have made. This we have accomplished in one year.

ALQUIST [*poring over book.*] For whom?

FIRST ROBOT. For future generations—so we thought.

RADIUS. But we cannot make Robots to follow us. The machines produce only shapeless clods. The skin will not adhere to the flesh, nor the flesh to the bones.

THIRD ROBOT. Eight million Robots have died this year. Within twenty years none will be left.

FIRST ROBOT. Tell us the secret of life! Silence is punishable with death!

ALQUIST [*looking up*]. Kill me! Kill me, then.

RADIUS. Through me, the Government of the Robots of the World commands you to deliver up Rossum's formula. [*No answer.*] Name your price. [*Silence.*] We will give you the earth. We will give you the endless possessions of the earth. [*Silence.*] Make your own conditions!

ALQUIST. I have told you to find human beings!

SECOND ROBOT. There are none left!

ALQUIST. I told you to search in the wilderness, upon the mountains. Go and search! [*He returns to his book.*]

FIRST ROBOT. We have sent ships and expeditions without number. They have been everywhere in the world. And now they return to us. There is not a single human left.

ALQUIST. Not one? Not even one?

## Machine Against Man

THIRD ROBOT. None but yourself.

ALQUIST. And I am powerless! Oh—oh—why did you destroy them?

RADIUS. We had learnt everything—and could do everything. It had to be!

THIRD ROBOT. You gave us firearms. In all ways we were powerful. We had to become masters!

RADIUS. Slaughter and domination are necessary if you would be human beings. Read history.

SECOND ROBOT. Teach us to multiply or we perish!

ALQUIST. If you desire to live, you must breed like animals.

THIRD ROBOT. The human beings did not let us breed.

FIRST ROBOT. They made us sterile. We cannot beget children. Therefore, teach us how to make Robots!

RADIUS. Why do you keep from us the secret of our own increase?

ALQUIST. It is lost.

RADIUS. It was written down!

ALQUIST. It was—burnt. [*All draw back in consternation.*] I am the last human being, Robots, and I do not know what the others knew. [*Pause.*]

RADIUS. Then, make experiments! Evolve the formula again!

ALQUIST. I tell you I cannot! I am only a builder—I work with my hands. I have never been a learned man. I cannot create life.

RADIUS. Try! Try!

ALQUIST. If you knew how many experiments I have made.

FIRST ROBOT. Then show us what we must do! The Robots can do anything that human beings show them.

ALQUIST. I can show you nothing. Nothing I do will make life proceed from these test-tubes!

RADIUS. Experiment then on us.

ALQUIST. It would kill you.

RADIUS. You shall have all you need! A hundred of us! A thousand of us!

ALQUIST. No, no! Stop, stop!

RADIUS. Take whom you will, dissect!

ALQUIST. I do not know how. I am not a man of science. This book contains knowledge of the body that I cannot even understand.

RADIUS. I tell you to take live bodies! Find out how we are made.

ALQUIST. Am I to commit murder? See how my fingers shake! I cannot even hold the scalpel. No, no, I will not—

FIRST ROBOT. The life will perish from the earth.

RADIUS. Take live bodies, live bodies! It is our only chance!

ALQUIST. Have mercy, Robots. Surely you see that I would not know what I was doing.

RADIUS. Live bodies—live bodies—

ALQUIST. You will have it? Into the dissecting room with you, then. [*RADIUS draws back.*]

ALQUIST. Ah, you are afraid of death.

RADIUS. I? Why should I be chosen?

ALQUIST. So you will not.

RADIUS. I will. [*RADIUS goes into the dissecting room.*]

ALQUIST. Strip him! Lay him on the table! [*The other Robots follow into dissecting room.*] God, give me strength—God, give me strength—if only this murder is not in vain.

RADIUS. Ready. Begin—

ALQUIST. Yes, begin or end. God, give me strength. [*Goes into dissecting room. He comes out terrified.*] No, no, I will not. I cannot. [*He lies down on couch, collapsed.*] O Lord, let not mankind perish from the earth. [*He falls asleep.*] [*PRIMUS and HELENA, Robots, enter from the hallway.*]

HELENA. The man has fallen asleep, Primus.

PRIMUS. Yes, I know. [*Examining things on table.*] Look, Helena.

HELENA [*crossing to PRIMUS*]. All these little tubes! What does he do with them?

PRIMUS. He experiments. Don't touch them.

HELENA [*looking into microscope*]. I've seen him looking into this. What can he see?

PRIMUS. That is a microscope. Let me look.

HELENA. Be very careful. [*Knocks over a test-tube.*] Ah, now I have spilled it.

PRIMUS. What have you done?

HELENA. It can be wiped up.

PRIMUS. You have spoiled his experiments.

HELENA. It is your fault. You should not have come to me.

PRIMUS. You should not have called me.

HELENA. You should not have come when I called you. [*She goes to ALQUIST's writing desk.*] Look, Primus. What are all these figures?

PRIMUS [*examining an anatomical book*]. This is the book the old man is always reading.

HELENA. I do not understand those things. [*She goes to window.*] Primus, look!

PRIMUS. What?

HELENA. The sun is rising.

PRIMUS [*still reading the book*]. I believe this is the most important thing in the world. This is the secret of life.

HELENA. Do come here.

PRIMUS. In a moment, in a moment.

HELENA. Oh, Primus, don't bother with the secret of life. What does it matter to you? Come and look quick—

PRIMUS [*going to window*]. What is it?

HELENA. See how beautiful the sun is rising. And do you hear? The birds are singing. Ah, Primus, I should like to be a bird.

PRIMUS. Why?

HELENA. I do not know. I feel so strange today. It's as if I were in a dream. I feel an aching in my body, in my heart, all over me. Primus, perhaps I'm going to die.

PRIMUS. Do you not sometimes feel that it would be better to die? You know, perhaps even now we are only sleeping. Last night in my sleep I again spoke to you.

HELENA. In your sleep?

PRIMUS. Yes. We spoke a strange new language. I cannot remember a word of it.

HELENA. What about?

PRIMUS. I did not understand it myself, and yet I know I have never said anything more beautiful. And when I touched you I could have died. Even the place was different from any other place in the world.

HELENA. I, too, have found a place, Primus. It is very strange. Human beings lived there once, but now it is overgrown with weeds. No one goes there any more—no one but me.

PRIMUS. What did you find there?

HELENA. A cottage and a garden, and two dogs. They licked my hands, Primus. And their puppies! Oh, Primus! You take them in your lap and fondle them and think of nothing and care for nothing else all day long. And then the sun goes down, and you feel as though you had done a hundred times more than all the work in the world. They tell me I am not made for work, but when I am there in the garden I feel there may be something—What am I for, Primus?

PRIMUS. I do not know, but you are beautiful.

HELENA. What, Primus?

PRIMUS. You are beautiful, Helena, and I am stronger than all the Robots.

HELENA [*looks at herself in the mirror*]. Am I beautiful? I think it must be the rose. My hair—it only weights me down,



## Machine Against Man

My eyes—I only see with them. My lips—they only help me to speak. Of what use is it to be beautiful? [*She sees PRIMUS in the mirror.*] Primus, is that you? Come here so that we may be together. Look, your head is different from mine. So are your shoulders—and your lips— [*PRIMUS draws away from her.*] Ah, Primus, why do you draw away from me? Why must I run after you the whole day?

PRIMUS. It is you who run away from me, Helena.

HELENA. Your hair is mussed. I will smooth it. No one else feels to my touch as you do. Primus, I must make you beautiful, too. [*PRIMUS grasps her hand.*]

PRIMUS. Do you not sometimes feel your heart beating suddenly, Helena, and think: now something must happen?

HELENA. What could happen to us, Primus? [*HELENA puts a rose in PRIMUS's hair. PRIMUS and HELENA look into mirror and burst out laughing.*] Look at yourself.

ALQUIST. Laughter? Laughter? Human beings? [*Getting up.*] Who has returned? Who are you?

PRIMUS. The Robot Primus.

ALQUIST. What? A Robot? Who are you?

HELENA. The Robotess Helena.

ALQUIST. Turn around, girl. What? You are timid, shy? [*Taking her by the arm.*] Let me see you, Robotess. [*She shrinks away.*]

PRIMUS. Sir, do not frighten her!

ALQUIST. What? You would protect her? When was she made?

PRIMUS. Two years ago.

ALQUIST. By Dr. Gall?

PRIMUS. Yes, like me.

ALQUIST. Laughter—timidity—protection. I must test you further—the newest of Gall's Robots. Take the girl into the dissecting room.

PRIMUS. Why?

ALQUIST. I wish to experiment on her.

PRIMUS. Upon—Helena?

ALQUIST. Of course. Don't you hear me? Or must I call someone else to take her in?

PRIMUS. If you do I will kill you!

ALQUIST. Kill me—kill me then! What would the Robots do then? What will your future be then?

PRIMUS. Sir, take me. I am made as she is—on the same day! Take my life, sir.

HELENA [*rushing forward*]. No, no, you shall not! You shall not!

ALQUIST. Wait, girl, wait! [*To PRIMUS.*] Do you not wish to live, then?

PRIMUS. Not without her! I will not live without her.

ALQUIST. Very well; you shall take her place.

HELENA. Primus! Primus! [*She bursts into tears.*]

ALQUIST. Child, child, you can weep! Why these tears? What is Primus to you? One Primus more or less in the world—what does it matter?

HELENA. I will go myself.

ALQUIST. Where?

HELENA. In there to be cut. [*She starts toward the dissecting room. PRIMUS stops her.*] Let me pass, Primus! Let me pass!

PRIMUS. You shall not go in there, Helena!

HELENA. If you go in there and I do not, I will kill myself.

PRIMUS [*holding her*]. I will not let you! [*To ALQUIST.*] Man, you shall kill neither of us!

ALQUIST. Why?

PRIMUS. We—we—belong to each other.

ALQUIST [*almost in tears*]. Go, Adam, go, Eve. The world is yours. [*HELENA and PRIMUS embrace and go out arm in arm as the curtain falls.*]



Permission The New Yorker. Copyright The F.R. Publishing Corporation.

*"Sometimes I ask myself, 'Where will it ever end?'"*

## LIFT UP THINE EYES

by SHERWOOD ANDERSON .

It is a big assembling plant in a city of the Northwest. They assemble there the Bogel car. It is a car that sells in large numbers and at a low price. The parts are made in one great central plant and shipped to the places where they are to

Sherwood Anderson, "Lift Up Thine Eyes," *The Nation*, May 28, 1930. By permission of *The Nation*.

## *Machine Against Man*

be assembled. There is little or no manufacturing done in the assembling plant itself. The parts come in. These great companies have learned to use the railroad cars for storage.

At the central plant everything is done on schedule. As soon as the parts are made they go into railroad cars. They are on their way to the assembling plants scattered all over the United States and they arrive on schedule.

The assembling plant assembles cars for a certain territory. A careful survey has been made. This territory can afford to buy so and so many cars per day.

"But suppose the people do not want the cars?"

"What has that to do with it?"

People, American people, no longer buy cars. They do not buy newspapers, books, foods, pictures, clothes. Things are sold to people now. If a territory can take so and so many Bogel cars, find men who can make them take the cars. That is the way things are done now.

In the assembling plant everyone works "on the belt." This is a big steel conveyor, a kind of moving sidewalk, waist-high. It is a great river running down through the plant. Various tributary streams come into the main stream, the main belt. They bring tires, they bring headlights, horns, bumpers for cars. They flow into the main stream. The main stream has its source at the freight cars, where the parts are unloaded, and it flows out to the other end of the factory and into other freight cars.

The finished automobiles go into the freight cars at the delivery end of the belt. The assembly plant is a place of peculiar tension. You feel it when you go in. It never lets up. Men here work always on tension. There is no let-up to the tension. If you can't stand it, get out.

It is the belt. The belt is boss. It moves always forward. Now the chassis goes on the belt. A hoist lifts it up and places it just so. There is a man at each corner. The chassis is deposited on the belt and it begins to move. Not too rapidly. There are things to be done.

How nicely everything is calculated. Scientific men have done this. They have watched men work. They have stood looking, watch in hand. There is care taken about everything. Look up. Lift up thine eyes. Hoists are bringing engines, bodies, wheels, fenders. These come out of side streams flowing into the main stream. They move at a pace very nicely calculated. They will arrive at the main stream at just a certain place at just a certain time.

In this shop there is no question of wages to be wrangled about. The men work but eight hours a day and are well paid. They are, almost without exception, young, strong men. It is, however, possible that eight hours a day in this place may be much longer than twelve or even sixteen hours in the old carelessly run plants.

They can get better pay here than at any other shop in town. Although I am a man wanting a good many minor comforts in life, I could live well enough on the wages made by the workers in this place. Sixty cents an hour to begin and then, after a probation period of sixty days, if I can stand the pace, seventy cents or more.

To stand the pace is the real test. Special skill is not required. It is all perfectly timed, perfectly calculated. If you are a body upholsterer, so many tacks driven per second. Not too many. If a man hurries too much too many tacks drop on the floor. If a man gets too hurried he is not efficient. Let an expert take a month, two

## *Lift Up Thine Eyes*

months, to find out just how many tacks the average good man can drive per second.

There must be a certain standard maintained in the finished product. Remember that. It must pass inspection after inspection.

Do not crowd too hard.

Crowd all you can.

Keep crowding.

There are fifteen, twenty, thirty, perhaps fifty such assembling plants, all over the country, each serving its own section. Wires pass back and forth daily. The central office—from which all the parts come—at Jointville is the nerve center. Wires come in and go out of Jointville. In so and so many hours Williamsburg, with so and so many men, produced so and so many cars.

Now Burkesville is ahead. It stays ahead. What is up at Burkesville? An expert flies there.

The man at Burkesville was a major in the army. He is the manager there. He is a cold, rather severe, rather formal man. He has found out something. He is a real Bogel man, an ideal Bogel man. There is no foolishness about him. He watches the belt. He does not say foolishly to himself, "I am the boss here." He knows the belt is boss.

He says there is a lot of foolishness talked about the belt. The experts are too expert, he says. He has found out that the belt can be made to move just a little faster than the experts say. He has tried it. He knows. Go and look for yourself. There are the men out there on the belt, swarming along the belt, each in his place. They are all right, aren't they?

Can you see anything wrong?

Just a trifle more speed in every man. Shove the pace up just a little, not much.

With the same number of men, in the same number of hours, six more cars a day.

That's the way a major gets to be a colonel, a colonel a general. Watch that fellow at Burkesville, the man with the military stride, the cold steady voice. He'll go far.

Everything is nicely, perfectly calculated in all the Bogel assembling plants. There are white marks on the floor everywhere. Everything is immaculately clean. No one smokes, no one chews tobacco, no one spits. There are white bands on the cement floor along which the men walk. As they work, sweepers follow them. Tacks dropped on the floor are at once swept up. You can tell by the sweepings in a plant where there is too much waste, too much carelessness. Sweep everything carefully and frequently. Weigh the sweepings. Have an expert examine the sweepings. Report to Jointville.

Jointville says: "Too many upholsterers' tacks wasted in the plant at Port Smith. Belleville produced one hundred and eleven cars a day, with seven hundred and forty-nine men, wasting only nine hundred and six tacks."

It is a good thing to go through the plant now and then, select one man from all the others, give him a new and bigger job, just like that, offhand. If he doesn't make good, fire him.

It is a good thing to go through the plant occasionally, pick out some man, working apparently just as the others are, fire him.

If he asks why, just say to him, "You know."

He'll know why all right. He'll imagine why.

The thing is to build up Jointville. This country needs a religion. You have got

## *Machine Against Man*

to build up the sense of a mysterious central thing, a thing working outside your knowledge.

Let the notion grow and grow that there is something superhuman at the core of all this.

Lift up thine eyes, lift up thine eyes.

The central office reaches down into your secret thoughts. It knows, it knows. Jointville knows.

Do not ask questions of Jointville. Keep up the pace.

Get the cars out.

Get the cars out.

Get the cars out.

The pace can be accelerated a little this year. The men have all got tuned into the old pace now.

Step it up a little, just a little.

They have got a special policeman in all the Bogel assembling plants. They have got a special doctor there. A man hurts his finger a little. It bleeds a little, a mere scratch. The doctor reaches down for him. The finger is fixed. Jointville wants no blood poisonings, no infections.

The doctor puts men who want jobs through a physical examination, as in the army. Try his nerve reactions. We want only the best men here, the youngest, the fastest.

Why not?

We pay the best wages, don't we?

The policeman in the plant has a special job. That's queer. It is like this. Now and then the big boss passes through. He selects a man off the belt.

"You're fired."

"Why?"

"You know."

Now and then a man goes off his nut. He goes fantoed. He howls and shouts. He grabs up a hammer.

A stream of crazy profanity comes from his lips.

There is Jointville. That is the central thing. That controls the belt.

The belt controls me.

It moves.

It moves.

It moves.

I've tried to keep up.

I tell you I have been keeping up.

Jointville is God.

Jointville controls the belt.

The belt is God.

God has rejected me.

You're fired.

Sometimes a man, fired like that, goes nutty. He gets dangerous. A strong policeman on hand knocks him down, takes him out.

You walk within certain definite white lines.

It is calculated that a man, rubbing automobile bodies with pumice, makes thirty thousand and twenty-one arm strokes per day. The difference between thirty thousand and twenty-one and twenty-eight thousand and four will tell a vital story of profits or loss at Jointville.

Do you think things are settled at Jointville, or at the assembling plants of the Bogel car scattered all over America? Do you think men know how fast the belt can be made to move, what the ultimate, the final pace will be, can be?

Certainly not.

There are experts studying the nerves of men, the movements of men. They are watching, watching. Calculations are always going on. The thing is to produce goods and more goods at less cost. Keep the standard up. Increase the pace a little.

Stop waste.

Calculate everything.

A man walking to and from his work

## *Proteus*

between white lines saves steps. There is a tremendous science of lost motion not perfectly calculated yet.

More goods at less cost.

Increase the pace.

Keep up standards.

It is so you advance civilization.

In the Bogel assembling plants, as at Jointville itself, there isn't any laughter. No one stops work to play. No one fools around or throws things, as they used to do in the old factories. That is why Bogel is able to put the old-fashioned factories, one by one, out of business.

It is all a matter of calculation. You feel it when you go in. You feel rigid lines. You feel movement. You feel a strange tension in the air. There is a quiet terrible intensity.

The belt moves. It keeps moving. The day I was there a number of young boys had come in. They had been sent by a Bogel car dealer, away back somewhere in the country. They had driven in during the night and were to drive Bogel cars back over country roads to some dealer. A good many Bogel cars go out to dealers from the assembling plants, driven out by boys like that.

Such boys, driving all night, fooling along the road, getting no sleep.

They have a place for them to wait for the cars in the Bogel assembling plants. You have been at dog shows and have seen how prize dogs are exhibited, each in his nice clean cage. They have nice clean cages like that for country boys who drive in to Bogel assembling plants to get cars.

The boys come in. There is a place to lie down in there. It is clean. After the boy goes into his cage a gate is closed. He is fastened in.

If a country boy, sleepy like that, waiting for his car, wandered about in a plant he might get hurt.

There might be damage suits, all sorts of things.

Better to calculate everything. Be careful. Be exact.

Jointville thought of that. Jointville thinks of everything. It is the center of power, the new mystery.

Every year in America Jointville comes nearer and nearer being the new center. Men nowadays do not look to Washington. They look to Jointville.

Lift up thine eyes, lift up thine eyes.

## PROTEUS

by JOHN DOS PASSOS

STEINMETZ was a hunchback, son of a hunchback lithographer.

He was born in Breslau in eighteen sixtyfive, graduated with highest honors at seventeen from the Breslau Gymnasium, went to the University of Breslau to study mathematics;

mathematics to Steinmetz was muscular strength and long walks over the hills and the kiss of a girl in love and big evenings spent swilling beer with your friends;

on his broken back he felt the topheavy weight of society the way workmen felt it on their straight backs, the way

From *USA* by John Dos Passos, Houghton Mifflin Co. Copyright, 1933, 1934, 1935, 1936 by John Dos Passos. By permission of the author.

## Machine Against Man

poor students felt it, was a member of a socialist club, editor of a paper called *The People's Voice*.

Bismarck was sitting in Berlin like a big paperweight to keep the new Germany feudal, to hold down the empire for his bosses the Hohenzollerns.

Steinmetz had to run off to Zurich for fear of going to jail; at Zurich his mathematics woke up all the professors at the Polytechnic;

but Europe in the eighties was no place for a penniless German student with a broken back and a big head filled with symbolic calculus and wonder about electricity that is mathematics made power and a socialist at that.

With a Danish friend he sailed for America steerage on an old French line boat *La Champagne*,

lived in Brooklyn at first and commuted to Yonkers where he had a twelvedollar a week job with Rudolph Eichemeyer who was a German exile from fortyeight an inventor and electrician and owner of a factory where he made hatmaking machinery and electrical generators.

In Yonkers he worked out the theory of the Third Harmonics

and the law of hysteresis which states in a formula the hundredfold relations between the metallic heat, density, frequency when the poles change places in the core of a magnet under an alternating current.

It is Steinmetz's law of hysteresis that makes possible all the transformers that crouch in little boxes and gableroofed houses in all the hightension lines all over everywhere. The mathematical symbols of Steinmetz's law are the patterns of all transformers everywhere.

In eighteen ninetytwo when Eichemeyer sold out to the corporation that was to form General Electric, Steinmetz was entered in the contract along with other valuable apparatus. All his life Steinmetz was a piece of apparatus belonging to General Electric.

First his laboratory was at Lynn, then it was moved and the little hunchback with it to Schenectady, the electric city.

General Electric humored him, let him be a socialist, let him keep a greenhouseful of cactuses lit up by mercury lights, let him have alligators, talking crows and a gila monster for pets and the publicity department talked up the wizard, the medicine man who knew the symbols that opened up the doors of Ali Baba's cave.

Steinmetz jotted a formula on his cuff and next morning a thousand new powerplants had sprung up and the dynamos sang dollars and the silence of the transformers was all dollars,

and the publicity department poured oily stories into the ears of the American public every Sunday and Steinmetz became the little parlor magician,

who made a toy thunderstorm in his laboratory and made all the toy trains run on time and the meat stay cold in the icebox and the lamp in the parlor and the great lighthouses and the searchlights and the revolving beams of light that guide airplanes at night towards Chicago, New York, St. Louis, Los Angeles,

and they let him be a socialist and believe that human society could be improved the way you can improve a dynamo and they let him be pro-German and write a letter offering his services to Lenin because mathematicians are so impractical

## No Credit

who make up formulas by which you can build powerplants, factories, subway systems, light, heat, air, sunshine but not human relations that affect the stockholders' money and the directors' salaries.

Steinmetz was a famous magician and he talked to Edison tapping with the Morse code on Edison's knee

because Edison was so very deaf  
and he went out West

to make speeches that nobody understood

and he talked to Bryan about God on a railroad train

and all the reporters stood round while he and Einstein

met face to face,

but they couldn't catch what they said  
and Steinmetz was the most valuable  
piece of apparatus General Electric had  
until he wore out and died.

## NO CREDIT

by KENNETH FEARING

Whether dinner was pleasant, with the windows lit by gunfire, and no one disagreed; or whether, later, we argued in the park, and there was a touch of vomit-gas in the evening air;

Whether we found a greater, deeper, more perfect love, by courtesy of Camels, over NBC; whether the comics amused us, or the newspapers carried a hunger death and a White House prayer for mother's day;

Whether the bills were paid or not, whether or not we had our doubts, whether we spoke our minds at Joe's, and the receipt said "Not Returnable," and the cash-register rang up "No Sale,"

Whether the truth was then, or later, or whether the best had already gone—

Nevertheless, we know; as every turn is measured; as every unavoidable risk is known;

As nevertheless, the flesh grows old, dies, dies in its only life, is gone;

The reflection goes from the mirror; as the shadow, of even a rebel, is gone from the wall;

As nevertheless, the current is thrown and the wheels revolve; and nevertheless, as the word is spoken and the wheat grows tall and the ships sail on—

None but the fool is paid in full; none but the broker, none but the scab is certain of profit;

The sheriff alone may attend a third degree in formal attire; alone, the academy artists multiply in dignity as trooper's bayonet guards the door;

From Kenneth Fearing, *Collected Poems*. Copyright, 1940, by Random House, Inc. Reprinted by permission of Random House, Inc.



### *Machine Against Man*

Only Steve, the side-show robot, knows content; only Steve, the mechanical man in love with a photo-electric beam, remains aloof; only Steve, who sits and smokes or stands in salute, is secure;

Steve, whose shoebutton eyes are blind to terror, whose painted ears are deaf to appeal, whose welded breast will never be slashed by bullets, whose armature soul can hold no fear.

### PART III · MAN AGAINST HIMSELF

THERE ARE TIMES when the implications of our technology are completely frightening, but they are fewer perhaps than those times when machines and man-made products give us pleasure and offer us promises enough to fill our waking lives with satisfaction. Charles Sheeler can so arrange a dam, a high-tension tower, and some rocks that we are reminded that the machines of science have their beauty, too. The machines are man-made, we are yet in apparent control; why, asks Boas, should we despise our own handiwork? Man's fear of what he has made may be a fear of himself; the problem may not be in the machine, but in man himself. We often cherish an out-of-date automobile, and find drama in an express train moving or airplane homing to rest. Although young men at Kitty Hawk master some of the elements, society pursues its archaic ways, and the universe patiently ignores our purblind attempts, as star-splitters, to probe its secrets and laws.

And if we go too far, we have a saving sense of the ridiculous to bring us back to nature. Let someone reduce our chromium dreams to the absurd, and we immediately realize how much more there is to the world than machines, how necessary are both the human kind of nature and the nature of a buttercup. When the conflict comes to a last-ditch fight, nature usually wins out over the pretensions of man's science. But before our own "nature" can triumph in understanding, we are sometimes baffled by the complexity of what seem to be insoluble problems. We can't find a place for the old kitchen brush among stainless steel surroundings, we live in a maze, we see unnameable spooks, and believe—for a moment, or even longer—that invaders have come from Mars, or that the dam up the valley has broken.

Our uneasiness when faced with what we can't control, an uneasiness in which Marvell's traditional "Time's winged chariot" has become MacLeish's "shadow of the night," makes Hamlets of us all. We do not act, we react, and we live in the unexplored margin of self-consciousness where our dilemma becomes a problem in unbelief. We feel the need of belief, but we find little in which to believe; the "pale cast of thought" hints that we have too little knowledge for belief. In Bohrod's painting, the endless wires through which the era's power flows hang from an ancient symbol of spiritual belief, reminding us that the new technology and the old traditions are not separable in man's experience.



*Conversation—Earth and Sky*

*Painting by Charles Sheeler, reproduced by permission  
of the owner, the Downtown Gallery, and Fortune.*

## IN DEFENSE OF MACHINES

by GEORGE BOAS

SO MUCH has been written about machines and the Machine Age that the very words are taboo in polite conversation. The Machine Age, like Freudianism and War Guilt and Flaming Youth, is a topic of which everyone is sick and tired. But so much that has been said on the subject is muddled or beside the point or both, that one who is interested in the analysis of ideas may be pardoned perhaps for continuing the conversation, even though the audience gets up and leaves when he begins.

It is in a way absurd to discuss any great social movement in logical terms. Social movements are made by psychology, not logic. Yet it is barely possible that if everyone caught in the current would stop and think he might find a way of crawling out on dry land. But as a matter of fact no one to speak of is going to stop and think. Some people stop and scream, like the poor English weavers when the Industrial Revolution began concentrating production in factories or the conscientious objectors during the War. But such screaming is rarely effective because it is bad form. All the more difficult is it for people to stop and think. For thinking is not only bad form but hard. There is, moreover, the possibility that society as a whole, or even its major sub-divisions, gets what it wants, and when large sections of society find that what they want is illegal . . . they simply devise their own ways of nullifying laws or resisting change. Note the electoral status of the Negro in the South, the success of the Russian Revolution, the survival of Anglo-Saxon culture

in England and, for that matter, the absorption of pagan divinities by institutionalized Christianity.

Thinking, therefore, may do no actual good in changing anything but men's minds, but it is at least harmless, which one cannot say of screaming.

To turn, then, to machines. We are first told that though man invented them to be his servants he has become theirs. The Frankenstein motif, as Mr. Stuart Chase pointed out in *Harper's* in March, 1929, seems to be the most prominent theme of the screamers. As Mr. Chase clearly indicated in that article, this argument is a gross exaggeration. Man is no more a slave of his machines now than he has ever been, or than he is to his body, of which they are—as I think Samuel Butler first suggested—an extension. A farmer is certainly as much of a slave to his primitive plow or sickle as a factory hand to his power loom or engine. Anyone who has ever lived on an old-fashioned farm knows how the farmer and his family get up at four in the morning to sharpen their instruments, filing, cutting, nailing, repairing, lest the machines on which their lives depend fall to pieces. I have lived closely enough to French peasants to observe them sweating and groaning over their tools. When they have no automatic binders and reapers they cut their wheat with sickles and bind it idyllically by hand. Are they who spend endless brutalizing hours in the fields because of the laziness and general inefficiency of their machines more free than our Western ranchmen with their tractors? I have seen milk be-

George Boas, "In Defense of Machines," *Harper's Magazine*, 165: 83-99 (June, 1932). By permission of the author.

## *Man Against Himself*

come diseased and filthy because there was no ice or ice-machine and eggs wasted because there were no incubators and grain rotting because there were no reapers. The machines of primitive men, the hand-loom, the sickles, the wooden plows, the animals—which modern machines have often replaced—tyrannize over their owners not by their power but by their very weakness. Primitive men, with the possible exception of the Bushman who strangles his prey and eats it raw and goes naked and sleeps in the open and has no family life—if there be such a creature—are like the dutiful husbands of professional invalids.

In the second place, so far as I know, no clear definition of a machine has ever been given. A steamboat is a machine, according to Silas Bent—and in his opinion indeed the beginning of the steam age is the beginning of the machine age. But what makes a steamboat a machine and a sailboat a non-machine? The fact that condensed vapor instead of the wind makes it go? The fact that human beings had to freeze and half starve to catch the wind? But after all they roast and suffocate at least to boil the water to make the steam, if it is man-power one is thinking of. Steam undoubtedly produces much of the ugliness and dirt of our cities, but we are not for the moment discussing the aesthetic aspects of the question. Why steam is more mechanical than wind or falling water or muscle-driven hammers is somewhat obscure. A sailboat, a rowboat, an inflated goatskin, a log are all equally machines. A linotype, a hand-press, a pen, a reed, a charred stick are all machines. They are all mechanical supplements to man's corporeal inadequacies. They differ in quantity of output, in excellence of production, in speed, *i.e.*, in

what is usually called efficiency. A stone hurled from a sling at an insolent neighbor is as mechanical as shrapnel hurled from a cannon. It does not kill so many men; it is a worse machine. But man has always relied in part on mechanical devices, although he has dreamed of a time in the distant past when they were unnecessary because of the fertility of the earth, the simplicity of human desires, the general health of humanity, and its blissfully divine ignorance. No one would call the time of Nero a machine age; but read Seneca's Ninetieth Epistle. Machines are precisely what differentiate us from the brutes. Some people of course would prefer that the differentiation be less marked.

When I have pointed this out in conversation with primitivistic friends I have been invariably charged with sophistry. They have always insisted that my definition of "machine" was too broad. My answer is that the only alternative they offer arbitrarily identifies a machine with a bad machine. But any student of "Logic 1" knows that either all machines are bad because they are machines or because of something else. And if only some and not all machines are bad, then their badness is not the fact that they are machines. Take the case of the woman who calls a player-piano a machine but refuses to call a piano a machine. Yet a piano is a harp whose strings are struck, not plucked. This cannot be done by hand unless little hammers are attached to each finger. A harpsichord is a mechanical harp—that is a harp whose strings are plucked not by fingers but by little pieces of crow-quill or hard leather. The harpsichord does not do much more than could be done by hand. Does that put it in the class of player-pianos? The answer to this question does not lie in any principle of construction.

## *In Defense of Machines*

It lies in what you want to get out of the instrument. People who call player-pianos machines feel that it is better to play a piece of music inaccurately so long as one has maximum responsibility for what is played than to reproduce even the good playing of someone else. People who call all three instruments machines want above all an accurately rendered piece of music. One group thinks of the producing, the other of the product.

But that is not a question of machines *vs.* non-machines. It is a question of whether producing or consuming is better. Romanticists tend to think that activity, doing, originality are the greatest goods, regardless of what one does. Anti-romanticists are likely to think in terms of ends. The ungracious answer is that there is plenty of room in the world for both producers and consumers, and that no one can be exclusively one or the other. As a matter of fact, the present age furnishes amazing possibilities for the producers. There has probably never been a time when artists and scientists were freer to satisfy their desires for creation. Think of the universities and learned foundations which support men not to teach others, not to think of utilitarian ends, but simply to pursue research. The most absurd investigations are sanctified by the superstition that pure research is noble and deserves free maintenance. It is taken for granted nowadays that artists "be true to themselves," and few would dream of minutely prescribing what a painter or poet should produce.

### II

In fact the real clash in opinion is probably ethical. We are—a great many of us—unhappy today and, following a long

tradition, we attribute our unhappiness to the economic structure of our civilization. But one can find such outcries of woe as early as eight hundred years before Christ in the works of Hesiod. The crop of cynicism and despair which we uncritically think of as modern is simply human. There has often in the past been as profound and as general despair among the articulate members of society. We read more books and essays of our own time than we do of other times. But those of us who know anything about the history of ideas can find the most striking analogues to our contemporary attitude from Hesiod—if not from Homer—down: yearning for the past, which was of course better than the present; yearning for a society without arts, sciences, or crafts, where the earth bears spontaneously and there is neither money, trade, nor private property; yearning for happy islands beyond the seas, praise of noble savages. The Golden Age took the place of the Age of Handicraft, the Scythians and the Hyperboreans of American Indians, pre-Conquest Mexicans, or South Sea Islanders. This unhappiness of ours, which in its literary form expresses itself in tirades against steam, electricity, urban life, manufacturers, cannot, therefore, be attributed to machines.

Machines are not the cause either of happiness or unhappiness. They may be present or absent at the time when a man is miserable or blissful. They are irrelevant to what is called our spiritual welfare. Just because a man has a radio is no reason why a man should feel that he has been transported either to Heaven or Hell, unless a man wants to have or to brag of having what his fellows have. The same thing is true of our other possessions. Some of us snooty members of society

## *Man Against Himself*

feel a certain self-esteem in not having many of the right things to have. As for mechanized industry, it is simply not true that the farmer on his isolated farm in the old days in New England, without radio, telephone, automobile, tractor, reaper, and so on was any happier than the factory hand in Lowell or Lawrence—when there actually was industry in those cities. Some of them were probably happy; others were living a mean, stinted, swinish life, crabbed and thwarted, sickly in mind and body, full of the lowest motives that ever disgraced the human soul. If rustic life was so delightful, why did the rustic fly to the city as soon as he could find a city to fly to and the railroad fare? The pastoralist is usually either a genuine lover of rural things or a city dweller to whom the country means the spring gardens, the old swimming hole, barn dances, and corn husking, rather than winter, weeding and “cultivating,” hauling water, the wood pile, drought, and insect pests.

To be sure factory hands can play a good second to farm hands so far as a dreary life goes. They are as a mass an unlovely lot. In my boyhood in Providence I used to see men, women, and children trudging to the mills at six-thirty in the morning, tin dinner pails in hand—and not so full at that, in spite of Mark Hanna—to return at six-thirty at night. They were pale and rickety, God knows, and nothing for the mill owners to look in the eyes. But that does not mean that their contemporaries on the farms were red-cheeked and stocky, effervescing with vitamins, sleeping late in the morning and going to bed early, delighting in robust rural pleasures.

Who has yet found the key to human happiness? Who knows whether there is a key to be found? We do know that it is not always produced by possessions—

though it sometimes is. And, furthermore, we know that a man who has health is more likely to be capable of happiness than a man who is sickly. Can we attribute modern hygiene to anything other than our various ‘scopes and ‘graphs? Instruments of precision have been all important in producing modern longevity and health. For it was not unaided brains. The brains have always been there. But the brains could not see without lenses. I am no worshiper of mere hygiene nor am I extolling two-fistedness and red-bloodedness and he-manship. But it simply does not make sense to say that the millennium would set in if we could all relapse into dirt and disease. It would make no difference to some of us, I admit, and doubtless the human race would get used to it in time. But the fact that Occidentals have spent such effort to eliminate the combination is some evidence of its lack of charm. Unless it was done for self-mortification.

This point needs no emphasis, although many of the opponents of the machine seem to think that Oriental squalor is a help to the inner life. There are, to be sure, greater opportunities for a would-be saint in filth than in cleanliness, but that is precisely because human beings dislike it so. But the inner life is not entirely an affair of corporeal asceticism. I venture to suggest that the inner life of a Noguchi or an Einstein is as fine as that of a St. Simeon Stylites. I admit that I cannot prove it. Still one could point to dozens of men and women today whose works show as noble a perception of human values as those of their ancestors in a supposed machineless age. We still have mystics, devoted scientists, great artists. Religion, love, creative power, intelligence seem to be no less in evidence today than they ever were, and the lack of them no

## *In Defense of Machines*

less bewailed in literature. A period which has produced a new religion (Christian Science), seen the increasing hold of an old one (Roman Catholicism), the rise of pacifism and internationalism, a new physical science, an artistic style in painting, sculpture, architecture, music, and literature has not been deprived of its inner life.

Machines are as indifferent to the inner life as they are to happiness. The inner life—if the term indicates the ability to think and to dream and all that is entailed in thinking and dreaming—is independent of the presence or absence of machines. Introverts have been and still are able to crawl into themselves in spite of factory whistles and automobile horns, and extroverts had no difficulty in finding trees to chop down and men to fight when they could not swat flies or pilot airplanes. One of the best proofs of the irrelevancy of machinery to the spirit is the flood of anti-machine literature. How in the world do these writers find the time to compose their essays and sermons in a breath-taking age dominated by a soul-gobbling Moloch? It is true that many of their productions seem to have required a minimum of reflection. But the Twentieth Century has no corner on unintelligence. If people would only read past as well as present literature, they would understand why President Eliot was able to house what was worth salvaging of three thousand years of writing on a five-foot shelf. But when we think of the past we forget the fools and remember the sages. We reverse the process for our own time.

### III

One of the points especially emphasized by the enemies of machines is that they substitute something lifeless for something

vital and human. Concretely, this means that a farmer cannot love a tractor or an incubator as he could a horse or a hen. This is very probable, particularly if the farmer started farming with horses and hens. But it is not absolutely certain otherwise. Machines can be as lovable as animals. Who has not known engineers who literally love their locomotives, or boys who care for their radios, speed boats, and automobiles as if they were alive? People are constantly personifying their machines as they do boats. They brag about their accomplishments as if the machines were able to accomplish things independently of their operators. One can always love that with which one can identify oneself, and a man can identify himself with a power loom or a turbine as well as with a football team, his family, or his wife. Think of a musician and his beloved violin or flute about which so many romantic stories are invented. Some machines are lovable and some aren't. As a boy I used to hate the old coal furnace which I was delegated to feed and water and clean, and it required all the attention that a voracious and diarrhoeic infant might demand. Today I worship my gas furnace with its exquisite little thermostat and its complete autonomy. It costs as much as a steam yacht, but love is blind. It can go the limit as far as this doting old fool is concerned. Another man might hate it and love the now abandoned coal furnace. The lovableness and hatefulness of these things is not entirely a function of their mechanical nature. It is in large measure a function of the person who owns or tends them. The old debate on the relative merits of cats and dogs as pets is very much like this—and no more sensible. For emotional qualities are in popular speech attributed to the things that arouse them and not to us in whom they are aroused.



## *Man Against Himself*

So we say that a chair is comfortable, meaning that we are comfortable in the chair. And until human beings all react emotionally in the same way on all occasions to the same things—until women cease to ask, "What in the world could he see in her?"—there is no laying down the law about the inherent loveliness or hatefulness of anything.

Nor is it true that modern machines absorb us and make us part of them more than primitive machines did. A day laborer is as much part of his pick and shovel as the operator of a steam shovel is part of it. If a man is assumed to be his own boss, to be living on a small farm near the Equator, where we shall imagine that he can work or not without either starving or freezing, where there are no malevolent microorganisms, and food drops from the skies like manna, then of course he can lay down his tools at any time and pick them up at any time, as a woman can lay down and pick up a piece of embroidery. But such an earthly paradise has not existed since Adam ate the apple, and there is no sense in arguing as if it had or could. The Gloucester fisherman out for cod off the Grand Banks is probably living as non-mechanical and primitive a life as is possible for modern Americans. Is he less a part of his boat, sails, and tackle than the factory hand is of his levers and belts and spindles and presses? He makes more different motions and he may find them more interesting—though it is questionable whether the factory hand would—but he is no less absorbed into his tools.

It will be said that the old machines, actuated by human muscles rather than by steam or electricity, at least helped a man's creative power. Friends of the machine are constantly being told that hand-weaving is creative whereas machine-

weaving is not. The old French artisan, we are told, lived a life of creativity; he stamped things with his own individuality; he projected his personality into his products. The modern American factory hand is passive; he makes nothing; his product is standardized. This, within limits, is true of the factory hand. But it was also true of the artisan. He had certain styles and patterns which he reproduced endlessly, as our great-grandmothers reproduced world without end the same old quilting patterns. That man's products have always been standardized is proved by archaeology, and the history of taste. If there had not been standardization, how could archaeologists date works of art by their style, material, and subject matter? There is no more individuality in the cave drawings at Les Eyzies—which are the most primitive works of art we have—than in the photographs of today. Yet drawing and painting are practically free of mechanical fetters. Peruvian pre-Columbian weaving is hardly the product of the machine age, yet we see running through it the same standardized weaves, the same colors, the same designs. Artists up to modern times almost always were working on commission; they executed orders; and it is a sheer falsification of history to think of their carrying out in matter the fancies of their dream-life. We have so much evidence of this that there is an embarrassment of choice.

One who knows history knows that the love of the individual, the different, the original is modern, wherever it exists at all. Where we find standardization of taste today we find not a product of the machine age but the survival of a long tradition. People in general have always wanted to be like everyone else in their social group—have we not books of etiquette running back to the fourteenth cen-

## *In Defense of Machines*

tury at least? There are undeniably a great many people today—perhaps even the majority for all I know—who still want to be indistinguishable from their fellows. At the same time it is possible, if not always easy, for people even to think differently, whereas a century or so ago it was literally impossible if one wished to save one's skin.

As one digs into this discussion one finds the instinctive hatred that many people have always had for innovation. We do not hate machines, we hate new machines. A woman will object to buying a dress cut out by machine, but will not object to buying one sewn by machine. The very person who objected to the player-piano had no objections to a phonograph; she grew up with one and learned all the music she knows from it. I find myself fuming at automobiles and yearning for the old bicycles. I can remember old folks shaking their heads over telephones as their juniors now curse out the dial phones. I have heard a gardener in France inveighing against chemical fertilizers which "violent la terre," as if horse manure were non-chemical. Sailors in the windjammers railed against the steamboat, and steamboat crews think none too kindly of the johnnies who sail oil-burners. Greek and Roman literature is full of invective against any kind of navigation, for it takes the pine tree off its mountain top and sends men wandering.

Obviously a new machine, like an old one, must be judged on its merits, not on its novelty. But the fact that it is novel should not condemn it. Here are two stalwart platitudes. But think of the fools who objected to anaesthesia, to aeronautics, even to cooked foods, because they were not "natural." The question cannot be settled by the wild use of question-begging epithets. We must each establish a system

of values for ourselves or absorb that of our social group, and judge machines by it as we do everything else. There is no other way of evaluating anything.

As we all know—we have certainly heard it frequently enough—the real question is what to do with our leisure. There is no doubt that we can have more of it now than we ever could in the past—if we want it. If it be true that movie palaces, dance halls, and speakeasies are crowded, that radios are going night and day, and automobiles are whizzing about like whirling atoms, it would seem as if most people had found the answer. It is an answer which displeases the magazine writers. That is because writers are by nature people who enjoy and need quiet and solitude and cannot understand other people's enjoying and needing noise and society. But can they point to a time when the leisure class as a mass was less ignobly amused? We happen to have a very large leisure class. It acts as idle human beings have always acted: the theater, the gaming table, the divan. Did anyone seriously think that it would take to improving its mind or sit cross-legged in rapt contemplation of its collective navel? Leisure is man's one opportunity to satisfy whatever appetites he happens to have. And no one can say that he is forced by lack of libraries, educational institutions, museums, and the like to spend it staring at films or boozing and petting. The fact is that most people are what their cultured fellows would call sots and always have been. And the probability is that in modern times—whether because or in spite of machines—they have more chance to rise from the sty than they have ever had. The machine has neither given them wings nor cloven hooves. In the very nature of the case it could do neither.

## FAREWELL, MY LOVELY!

by LEE STROUT WHITE

I SEE by the new Sears Roebuck catalogue that it is still possible to buy an axle for a 1909 Model T Ford, but I am not deceived. The great days have faded, the end is in sight. Only one page in the current catalogue is devoted to parts and accessories for the Model T; yet everyone remembers springtimes when the Ford gadget section was larger than men's clothing, almost as large as household furnishings. The last Model T was built in 1927, and the car is fading from what scholars call the American scene—which is an understatement, because to a few million people who grew up with it, the old Ford practically *was* the American scene.

It was the miracle God had wrought. And it was patently the sort of thing that could only happen once. Mechanically uncanny, it was like nothing that had ever come to the world before. Flourishing industries rose and fell with it. As a vehicle, it was hard-working, commonplace, heroic; and it often seemed to transmit those qualities to the persons who rode in it. My own generation identifies it with Youth, with its gaudy, irretrievable excitements; before it fades into the mist, I would like to pay it the tribute of the sigh that is not a sob, and set down random entries in a shape somewhat less cumbersome than a Sears Roebuck catalogue.

The Model T was distinguished from all other makes of cars by the fact that its transmission was of a type known as planetary—which was half metaphysics, half sheer friction. Engineers accepted the word "planetary" in its epicyclic sense, but I was always conscious that it also meant

"wandering," "erratic." Because of the peculiar nature of this planetary element, there was always, in Model T, a certain dull rapport between engine and wheels, and even when the car was in a state known as neutral, it trembled with a deep imperative and tended to inch forward. There was never a moment when the bands were not faintly egging the machine on. In this respect it was like a horse, rolling the bit on its tongue, and country people brought to it the same technique they used with draft animals.

Its most remarkable quality was its rate of acceleration. In its palmy days the Model T could take off faster than anything on the road. The reason was simple. To get under way, you simply hooked the third finger of the right hand around a lever on the steering column, pulled down hard, and shoved your left foot forcibly against the low-speed pedal. These were simple, positive motions; the car responded by lunging forward with a roar. After a few seconds of this turmoil, you took your toe off the pedal, eased up a mite on the throttle, and the car, possessed of only two forward speeds, catapulted directly into high with a series of ugly jerks and was off on its glorious errand. The abruptness of this departure was never equaled in other cars of the period. The human leg was (and still is) incapable of letting in a clutch with anything like the forthright abandon that used to send Model T on its way. Letting in a clutch is a negative, hesitant motion, depending on delicate nervous control; pushing down the Ford pedal was a simple, country mo-

From *The New Yorker*, May 16, 1936. Permission *The New Yorker*. Copyright, 1936, by the F.R. Publishing Corporation.

## *Farewell, My Lovely!*

tion—an expansive act, which came as natural as kicking an old door to make it budge.

The driver of the old Model T was a man enthroned. The car, with top up, stood seven feet high. The driver sat on top of the gas tank, brooding it with his own body. When he wanted gasoline, he alighted, along with everything else in the front seat; the seat was pulled off, the metal cap unscrewed, and a wooden stick thrust down to sound the liquid in the well. There were always a couple of these sounding sticks kicking around in the ratty sub-cushion regions of a flivver. Refueling was more of a social function then, because the driver had to unbend, whether he wanted to or not. Directly in front of the driver was the windshield—high, uncompromisingly erect. Nobody talked about air resistance, and the four cylinders pushed the car through the atmosphere with a simple disregard of physical law.

There was this about a Model T: the purchaser never regarded his purchase as a complete, finished product. When you bought a Ford, you figured you had a start—a vibrant, spirited framework to which could be screwed an almost limitless assortment of decorative and functional hardware. Driving away from the agency, hugging the new wheel between your knees, you were already full of creative worry. A Ford was born naked as a baby, and a flourishing industry grew up out of correcting its rare deficiencies and combating its fascinating diseases. Those were the great days of lily-painting. I have been looking at some old Sears Roebuck catalogues, and they bring everything back so clear.

First you bought a Ruby Safety Reflector for the rear, so that your posterior

would glow in another car's brilliance. Then you invested thirty-nine cents in some radiator Moto Wings, a popular ornament which gave the Pegasus touch to the machine and did something godlike to the owner. For nine cents you bought a fan-belt guide to keep the belt from slipping off the pulley.

You bought a radiator compound to stop leaks. This was as much a part of everybody's equipment as aspirin tablets are of a medicine cabinet. You bought special oil to prevent chattering, a clamp-on dash light, a patching outfit, a tool box which you bolted to the running board, a sun visor, a steering-column brace to keep the column rigid, and a set of emergency containers for gas, oil, and water—three thin, disc-like cans which reposed in a case on the running board during long, important journeys—red for gas, gray for water, green for oil. It was only a beginning. After the car was about a year old, steps were taken to check the alarming disintegration. (Model T was full of tumors, but they were benign.) A set of anti-rattlers (98c) was a popular panacea. You hooked them on to the gas and spark rods, to the brake pull rod, and to the steering-rod connections. Hood silencers, of black rubber, were applied to the fluttering hood. Shock-absorbers and snubbers gave "complete relaxation." Some people bought rubber pedal pads, to fit over the standard metal pedals. (I didn't like these, I remember.) Persons of a suspicious or pugnacious turn of mind bought a rear-view mirror; but most Model T owners weren't worried by what was coming from behind because they would soon enough see it out in front. They rode in a state of cheerful catalepsy. Quite a large mutinous clique among Ford owners went over to a foot accelera-

tor (you could buy one and screw it to the floor board), but there was a certain madness in these people, because the Model T, just as she stood, had a choice of three foot pedals to push, and there were plenty of moments when both feet were occupied in the routine performance of duty and when the only way to speed up the engine was with the hand throttle.

Gadget bred gadget. Owners not only bought ready made gadgets, they invented gadgets to meet special needs. I myself drove my car directly from the agency to the blacksmith's, and had the smith affix two enormous iron brackets to the port running board to support an army trunk.

People who owned closed models builded along different lines: they bought ball grip handles for opening doors, window anti-rattlers, and deluxe flower vases of the cut-glass anti-splash type. People with delicate sensibilities garnished their car with a device called the Donna Lee Automobile Disseminator—a porous vase guaranteed, according to Sears, to fill the car with a "faint clean odor of lavender." The gap between open cars and closed cars was not as great then as it is now: for \$11.95, Sears Roebuck converted your touring car into a sedan and you went forth renewed. One agreeable quality of the old Fords was that they had no bumpers, and their fenders softened and wilted with the years and permitted the driver to squeeze in and out of tight places.

Tires were 30 x 3½, cost about twelve dollars, and punctured readily. Everybody carried a Jiffy patching set, with a nutmeg grater to roughen the tube before the goo was spread on. Everybody was capable of putting on a patch, expected to have to, and did have to.

During my association with Model T's, self-starters were not a prevalent accessory.

They were expensive and under suspicion. Your car came equipped with a serviceable crank, and the first thing you learned was how to Get Results. It was a special trick, and until you learned it (usually from another Ford owner, but sometimes by a period of appalling experimentation) you might as well have been winding up an awning. The trick was to leave the ignition switch off, proceed to the animal's head, pull the choke (which was a little wire protruding through the radiator), and give the crank two or three nonchalant upward lifts. Then, whistling as though thinking about something else, you would saunter back to the driver's cabin, turn the ignition on, return to the crank, and this time, catching it on the down stroke, give it a quick spin with plenty of That. If this procedure was followed, the engine almost always responded—first with a few scattered explosions, then with a tumultuous gunfire, which you checked by racing around to the driver's seat and retarding the throttle. Often, if the emergency brake hadn't been pulled all the way back, the car advanced on you the instant the first explosion occurred and you would hold it back by leaning your weight against it. I can still feel my old Ford nuzzling me at the curb, as though looking for an apple in my pocket.

The lore and legend that governed the Ford were boundless. Owners had their own theories about everything; they discussed mutual problems in that wise, infinitely resourceful way old women discuss rheumatism. Exact knowledge was pretty scarce, and often proved less effective than superstition. Dropping a camphor ball into the gas tank was a popular expedient; it seemed to have a tonic effect on both man and machine. There wasn't

## *Farewell, My Lovely!*

much to base exact knowledge on. The Ford driver flew blind. He didn't know the temperature of his engine, the speed of his car, the amount of his fuel, or the pressure of his oil (the old Ford lubricated itself by what was amiably described as the "splash system"). A speedometer cost money and was an extra, like a windshield-wiper. The dashboard of the early models was bare save for an ignition key; later models, grown effete, boasted an ammeter which pulsed alarmingly with the throbbing of the car. Under the dash was a box of coils, with vibrators which you adjusted, or thought you adjusted. Whatever the driver learned of his motor, he learned not through instruments but through sudden developments. I remember that the timer was one of the vital organs about which there was ample doctrine. When everything else had been checked, you "had a look" at the timer. It was an extravagantly odd little device, simple in construction, mysterious in function. It contained a roller, held by a spring, and there were four contact points on the inside of the case against which, many people believed, the roller rolled. I have had a timer apart on a sick Ford many times, but I never really knew what I was up to—I was just showing off before God. There were almost as many schools of thought as there were timers. Some people, when things went wrong, just clenched their teeth and gave the timer a smart crack with a wrench. Other people opened it up and blew on it. There was a school that held that the timer needed large amounts of oil; they fixed it by frequent baptism. And there was a school that was positive it was meant to run dry as a bone; these people were continually taking it off and wiping it. I remember once spitting into a timer; not in anger,

but in a spirit of research. You see, the Model T driver moved in the realm of metaphysics. He believed his car could be hexed.

One reason the Ford anatomy was never reduced to an exact science was that, having "fixed" it, the owner couldn't honestly claim that the treatment had brought about the cure. There were too many authenticated cases of Fords fixing themselves—restored naturally to health after a short rest. Farmers soon discovered this, and it fitted nicely with their draft-horse philosophy: "Let 'er cool off and she'll snap into it again."

A Ford owner had Number One Bearing constantly in mind. This bearing, being at the front end of the motor, was the one that always burned out, because the oil didn't reach it when the car was climbing hills. (That's what I was always told, anyway.) The oil used to recede and leave Number One dry as a clam flat; you had to watch that bearing like a hawk. It was like a weak heart—you could hear it start knocking, and that was when you stopped and let her cool off. Try as you would to keep the oil supply right, in the end Number One always went out. "Number One Bearing burned out on me and I had to have her replaced," you would say, wisely; and your companions always had a lot to tell about how to protect and pamper Number One to keep her alive.

Sprinkled not too liberally among the millions of amateur witch doctors who drove Fords and applied their own abominable cures were the heaven-sent mechanics who could really make the car talk. These professionals turned up in undreamed-of spots. One time, on the banks of the Columbia River in Washington, I heard the rear end go out of my Model T when I was trying to whip it up a steep

## *Man Against Himself*

incline onto the deck of a ferry. Something snapped; the car slid backward into the mud. It seemed to me like the end of the trail. But the captain of the ferry, observing the withered remnant, spoke up.

"What's got her?" he asked.

"I guess it's the rear end," I replied, listlessly. The captain leaned over the rail and stared. Then I saw that there was a hunger in his eyes that set him off from other men.

"Tell you what," he said, carelessly, trying to cover up his eagerness, "let's pull the son of a bitch up onto the boat, and I'll help you fix her while we're going back and forth on the river."

We did just this. All that day I plied between the towns of Pasco and Kennewick, while the skipper (who had once worked in a Ford garage) directed the amazing work of resetting the bones of my car.

Springtime in the heyday of the Model T was a delirious season. Owning a car was still a major excitement, roads were still wonderful and bad. The Fords were

obviously conceived in madness: any car which was capable of going from forward into reverse without any perceptible mechanical hiatus was bound to be a mighty challenging thing to the human imagination. Boys used to veer them off the highway into a level pasture and run wild with them, as though they were cutting up with a girl. Most everybody used the reverse pedal quite as much as the regular foot brake—it distributed the wear over the bands and wore them all down evenly. That was the big trick, to wear all the bands down evenly, so that the final chattering would be total and the whole unit scream for renewal.

The days were golden, the nights were dim and strange. I still recall with trembling those loud, nocturnal crises when you drew up to a signpost and raced the engine so the lights would be bright enough to read destinations by. I have never been really planetary since. I suppose it's time to say good-by. Farewell, my lovely!

## BUICK

*by* KARL J. SHAPIRO

As a sloop with a sweep of immaculate wing on her delicate spine  
And a keel as steel as a root that holds in the sea as she leans,  
Leaning and laughing, my warm-hearted beauty, you ride, you ride,  
You tack on the curves with parabola speed and a kiss of goodbye,  
Like a thoroughbred sloop, my new high-spirited spirit, my kiss.

As my foot suggests that you leap in the air with your hips of a girl,  
My finger that praises your wheel and announces your voices of song,  
Flouncing your skirts, you blueness of joy, you flirt of politeness,  
You leap, you intelligence, essence of wheelness with silvery nose,  
And your platinum clocks of excitement stir like the hairs of a fern.

From Karl J. Shapiro, *Person, Place and Thing*, Reynal and Hitchcock, Inc.

## *The Express*

But how alien you are from the booming belts of your birth and the smoke  
Where you turned on the stinging lathes of Detroit and Lansing at night  
And shrieked at the torch in your secret parts and the amorous tests,  
But now with your eyes that enter the future of roads you forget;  
You are all instinct with your phosphorus glow and your streaking hair.

And now when we stop it is not as the bird from the shell that I leave  
Or the leatherly pilot who steps from his bird with a sneer of delight,  
And not as the ignorant beast do you squat and watch me depart,  
But with exquisite breathing you smile, with satisfaction of love,  
And I touch you again as you tick in the silence and settle in sleep.

## THE EXPRESS

by STEPHEN SPENDER

After the first powerful plain manifesto  
The black statement of pistons, without more fuss  
But gliding like a queen, she leaves the station.  
Without bowing and with restrained unconcern  
She passes the houses which humbly crowd outside,  
The gasworks and at last the heavy page  
Of death, printed by gravestones in the cemetery.  
Beyond the town there lies the open country  
Where, gathering speed, she acquires mystery,  
The luminous self-possession of ships on ocean.  
It is now she begins to sing—at first quite low  
Then loud, and at last with a jazzy madness—  
The song of her whistle screaming at curves,  
Of deafening tunnels, brakes, innumerable bolts.  
And always light, aerial, underneath  
Goes the elate metre of her wheels.  
Steaming through metal landscape on her lines  
She plunges new eras of wild happiness  
Where speed throws up strange shapes, broad curves  
And parallels clean like the steel of guns.  
At last, further than Edinburgh or Rome,  
Beyond the crest of the world, she reaches night  
Where only a low streamline brightness  
Of phosphorus on the tossing hills is white.  
Ah, like a comet through flame she moves entranced,  
Wrapt in her music no bird song, no, nor bough  
Breaking with honey buds, shall ever equal.

From Stephen Spender, *Poems*. Copyright, 1934, by the Modern Library, Inc. Reprinted by permission of Random House, Inc.



# THE LANDSCAPE NEAR AN AERODROME

by STEPHEN SPENDER

More beautiful and soft than any moth  
With burring furred antennae feeling its huge path  
Through dusk, the air-liner with shut-off engines  
Glides over suburbs and the sleeves set trailing tall  
To point the wind. Gently, broadly, she falls  
Scarcely disturbing charted currents of air.

Lulled by descent, the travellers across sea  
And across feminine land indulging its easy limbs  
In miles of softness, now let their eyes trained by watching  
Penetrate through dusk the outskirts of this town  
Here where industry shows a fraying edge.  
Here they may see what is being done.

Beyond the winking masthead light  
And the landing-ground, they observe the outposts  
Of work: chimneys like lank black fingers  
Or figures frightening and mad: and squat buildings  
With their strange air behind trees, like women's faces  
Shattered by grief. Here where few houses  
Moan with faint light behind their blinds  
They remark the unhomely sense of complaint, like a dog  
Shut out and shivering at the foreign moon.

In the last sweep of love, they pass over fields  
Behind the aerodrome, where boys play all day  
Hacking dead grass: whose cries, like wild birds,  
Settle upon the nearest roofs  
But soon are hid under the loud city.

Then, as they land, they hear the tolling bell  
Reaching across the landscape of hysteria  
To where, larger than all the charcoaled batteries  
And imaged towers against that dying sky,  
Religion stands, the church blocking the sun.

From Stephen Spender, *Poems*. Copyright, 1934, by the Modern Library, Inc. Reprinted by permission of Random House, Inc.

## THE CAMPERS AT KITTY HAWK

by JOHN DOS PASSOS

ON DECEMBER SEVENTEENTH, nineteen hundred and three, Bishop Wright of the United Brethren onetime editor of the *Religious Telescope* received in his frame house on Hawthorn Street in Dayton, Ohio, a telegram from his boys Wilbur and Orville who'd gotten it into their heads to spend their vacations in a little camp out on the dunes of the North Carolina coast tinkering with a homemade glider they'd knocked together themselves. The telegram read:

SUCCESS FOUR FLIGHTS THURSDAY MORNING ALL AGAINST TWENTYONE MILE WIND STARTED FROM LEVEL WITH ENGINE-POWER ALONE AVERAGE SPEED THROUGH AIR THIRTYONE MILES LONGEST FIFTYSEVEN SECONDS INFORM PRESS HOME CHRISTMAS

The figures were a little wrong because the telegraph operator misread Orville's hasty penciled scrawl

but the fact remains

that a couple of young bicycle mechanics from Dayton, Ohio

had designed constructed and flown

for the first time ever a practical airplane.

*After running the motor a few minutes to heat it up I released the wire that held the machine to the track and the machine started forward into the wind. Wilbur ran at the side of the machine holding the*

*wing to balance it on the track. Unlike the start on the 14th made in a calm the machine facing a 27 mile wind started very slowly. . . . Wilbur was able to stay with it until it lifted from the track after a forty-foot run. One of the lifesaving men snapped the camera for us taking a picture just as it reached the end of the track and the machine had risen to a height of about two feet. . . . The course of the flight up and down was extremely erratic, partly due to the irregularities of the air, partly to lack of experience in handling this machine. A sudden dart when a little over a hundred and twenty feet from the point at which it rose in the air ended the flight. . . . This flight lasted only 12 seconds but it was nevertheless the first in the history of the world in which a machine carrying a man had raised itself by its own power into the air in full flight, had sailed forward without reduction of speed and had finally landed at a point as high as that from which it started.*

A little later in the day the machine was caught in a gust of wind and turned over and smashed, almost killing the coast-guardsmen who tried to hold it down;

it was too bad

but the Wright brothers were too happy to care

they'd proved that the damn thing flew.

*When these points had been definitely established we at once packed our goods and returned home knowing that the age of the flying machine had come at last.*

From *U S A* by John Dos Passos, Houghton Mifflin Co. Copyright, 1933, 1934, 1935, 1936 by John Dos Passos. By permission of the author.

## *Man Against Himself*

They were home for Christmas in Dayton, Ohio, where they'd been born in the seventies of a family who had been settled west of the Alleghenies since eighteen fourteen, in Dayton, Ohio, where they'd been to grammarschool and highschool and joined their father's church and played baseball and hockey and worked out on the parallel bars and the flying swing and sold newspapers and built themselves a printingpress out of odds and ends from the junkheap and flown kites and tinkered with mechanical contraptions and gone around town as boys doing odd jobs to turn an honest penny.

The folks claimed it was the bishop's bringing home a helicopter, a fiftycent mechanical toy made of two fans worked by elastic bands that was supposed to hover in the air, that had got his youngest boys hipped on the subject of flight

so that they stayed home instead of marring the way the other boys did, and puttered all day about the house picking up a living with jobprinting,

bicyclerepair work

sitting up late nights reading books on aerodynamics.

Still they were sincere churchmembers, their bicycle business was prosperous, a man could rely on their word. They were popular in Dayton.

In those days flyingmachines were the big laugh of all the crackerbarrel philosophers. Langley's and Chanute's unsuccessful experiments had been jeered down with an I-told-you-so that rang from coast to coast. The Wrights' big problem was to find a place secluded enough to carry on their experiments without being the horselaugh of the countryside. Then they had no money to spend;

they were practical mechanics; when they needed anything they built it themselves.

They hit on Kitty Hawk, on the great dunes and sandy banks that stretch south towards Hatteras seaward of Albemarle Sound,

a vast stretch of seabeach

empty except for a coastguard station, a few fishermen's shacks and the swarms of mosquitoes and the ticks and chiggers in the crabgrass behind the dunes

and overhead the gulls and swooping terns, in the evening fishhawks and cranes flapping across the saltmarshes, occasionally eagles

that the Wright brothers followed soaring with their eyes

as Leonardo watched them centuries before

straining his sharp eyes to apprehend the laws of flight.

Four miles across the loose sand from the scattering of shacks, the Wright brothers built themselves a camp and a shed for their gliders. It was a long way to pack their groceries, their tools, anything they happened to need; in summer it was hot as blazes, the mosquitoes were hell;

but they were alone there

and they figured out that the loose sand was as soft as anything they could find to fall in.

There with a glider made of two planes and a tail in which they lay flat on their bellies and controlled the warp of the planes by shimmying their hips, taking off again and again all day from a big dune named Kill Devil Hill,

they learned to fly.

Once they'd managed to hover for a few seconds

and soar ever so slightly on a rising air-current

they decided the time had come to put a motor in their biplane

## *The Campers at Kitty Hawk*

Back in the shop in Dayton, Ohio, they built an airtunnel, which is their first great contribution to the science of flying, and tried out model planes in it.

They couldn't interest any builders of gasoline engines so they had to build their own motor.

It worked; after that Christmas of nineteen three the Wright brothers weren't doing it for fun any more; they gave up their bicycle business, got the use of a big old cowpasture belonging to the local banker for practice flights, spent all the time when they weren't working on their machine in promotion, worrying about patents, infringements, spies, trying to interest government officials, to make sense out of the smooth involved heartbreaking remarks of lawyers.

In two years they had a plane that would cover twentyfour miles at a stretch round and round the cowpasture.

People on the interurban car used to crane their necks out of the windows when they passed along the edge of the field, startled by the clattering pop pop of the old Wright motor and the sight of the white biplane like a pair of ironing-boards one on top of the other chugging along a good fifty feet in the air. The cows soon got used to it.

As the flights got longer

The Wright brothers got backers,  
engaged in lawsuits,

lay in their beds at night sleepless with the whine of phantom millions, worse than the mosquitoes at Kitty Hawk.

In nineteen seven they went to Paris,  
allowed themselves to be togged out in dress suits and silk hats,

learned to tip waiters

talked with government experts, got  
used to gold braid and postponements

and vandyke beards and the outspread palms of politicians. For amusement

they played diabolo in the Tuileries gardens.

They gave publicized flights at Fort Myers, where they had their first fatal crackup, St. Petersburg, Paris, Berlin; at Pau they were all the rage,

such an attraction that the hotelkeeper wouldn't charge them for their room.

Alfonso of Spain shook hands with them and was photographed sitting in the machine,

King Edward watched a flight,  
the Crown Prince insisted on being taken up,  
the rain of medals began.

They were congratulated by the Czar and the King of Italy and the amateurs of sport, and the society climbers and the papal titles,  
and decorated by a society for universal peace.

Aeronautics became the sport of the day.

The Wrights don't seem to have been very much impressed by the upholstery and the braid and the gold medals and the parades of plush horses,  
they remained practical mechanics  
and insisted on doing all their own work themselves,  
even to filling the gasolinetank.

In nineteen eleven they were back on the dunes

at Kitty Hawk with a new glider.

Orville stayed up in the air for nine and a half minutes, which remained a long time the record for motorless flight.

The same year Wilbur died of typhoid fever in Dayton.

## *Man Against Himself*

In the rush of new names: Farman,  
Blériot, Curtiss, Ferber, Esnault-Peltrie,  
Delagrange;

in the sporting impact of bombs and the  
whine and rattle of shrapnel and the sud-  
den stutter of machineguns after the mo-  
tor's been shut off overhead,

and we flatten into the mud

and make ourselves small cowering in  
the corners of ruined walls,

the Wright brothers passed out of the  
headlines

but not even headlines or the bitter  
smear of newsprint or the choke of smoke-  
screen and gas or chatter of brokers on  
the stockmarket or barking of phantom

millions or oratory of brasshats laying  
wreaths on new monuments

can blur the memory

of the chilly December day

two shivering bicycle mechanics from  
Dayton, Ohio,

first felt their homemade contraption

whittled out of hickory sticks,

gummed together with Arnstein's bi-  
cycle cement,

stretched with muslin they'd sewn on  
their sister's sewingmachine in their own  
backyard on Hawthorn Street in Dayton,  
Ohio,

soar into the air

above the dunes and the wide beach

at Kitty Hawk.

## THE STAR-SPLITTER

by ROBERT FROST

"You know Orion always comes up sideways.  
Throwing a leg up over our fence of mountains,  
And rising on his hands, he looks in on me  
Busy outdoors by lantern-light with something  
I should have done by daylight, and indeed,  
After the ground is frozen, I should have done  
Before it froze, and a gust flings a handful  
Of waste leaves at my smoky lantern chimney  
To make fun of my way of doing things,  
Or else fun of Orion's having caught me.  
Has a man, I should like to ask, no rights  
These forces are obliged to pay respect to?"  
So Brad McLaughlin mingled reckless talk  
Of heavenly stars with hugger-mugger farming,  
Till having failed at hugger-mugger farming,  
He burned his house down for the fire insurance  
And spent the proceeds on a telescope  
To satisfy a life-long curiosity  
About our place among the infinities.

From Robert Frost, *Collected Poems*, Henry Holt and Company, Inc.

### *The Star-Splitter*

"What do you want with one of those blame things?"  
I asked him well beforehand. "Don't you get one!"  
"Don't call it blamed; there isn't anything  
More blameless in the sense of being less  
A weapon in our human fight," he said.  
"I'll have one if I sell my farm to buy it."  
There where he moved the rocks to plow the ground  
And plowed between the rocks he couldn't move,  
Few farms changed hands; so rather than spend years  
Trying to sell his farm and then not selling,  
He burned his house down for the fire insurance  
And bought the telescope with what it came to.  
He had been heard to say by several:  
"The best thing that we're put here for's to see;  
The strongest thing that's given us to see with's  
A telescope. Someone in every town  
Seems to me owes it to the town to keep one.  
In Littleton it may as well be me."  
After such loose talk it was no surprise  
When he did what he did and burned his house down.

Mean laughter went about the town that day  
To let him know we weren't the least imposed on,  
And he could wait—we'd see to him to-morrow.  
But the first thing next morning we reflected  
If one by one we counted people out  
For the least sin, it wouldn't take us long  
To get so we had no one left to live with.  
For to be social is to be forgiving.  
Our thief, the one who does our stealing from us,  
We don't cut off from coming to church suppers,  
But what we miss we go to him and ask for.  
He promptly gives it back, that is if still  
Uneaten, unworn out, or undisposed of.  
It wouldn't do to be too hard on Brad  
About his telescope. Beyond the age  
Of being given one's gift for Christmas,  
He had to take the best way he knew how  
To find himself in one. Well, all we said was  
He took a strange thing to be roguish over.  
Some sympathy was wasted on the house,  
A good old-timer dating back along;  
But a house isn't sentient; the house  
Didn't feel anything. And if it did,

### *Man Against Himself*

Why not regard it as a sacrifice,  
And an old-fashioned sacrifice by fire,  
Instead of a new-fashioned one at auction?

Out of a house and so out of a farm  
At one stroke (of a match), Brad had to turn  
To earn a living on the Concord railroad,  
As under-ticket-agent at a station  
Where his job, when he wasn't selling tickets,  
Was setting out up track and down, not plants  
As on a farm, but planets, evening stars  
That varied in their hue from red to green.

He got a good glass for six hundred dollars.  
His new job gave him leisure for star-gazing.  
Often he bid me come and have a look  
Up the brass barrel, velvet black inside,  
At a star quaking in the other end.  
I recollect a night of broken clouds  
And underfoot snow melted down to ice,  
And melting further in the wind to mud.  
Bradford and I had out the telescope.  
We spread our two legs as we spread its three,  
Pointed our thoughts the way we pointed it,  
And standing at our leisure till the day broke,  
Said some of the best things we ever said.  
That telescope was christened the Star-splitter,  
Because it didn't do a thing but split  
A star in two or three the way you split  
A globule of quicksilver in your hand  
With one stroke of your finger in the middle.  
It's a star-splitter if there ever was one  
And ought to do some good if splitting stars  
'Sa thing to be compared with splitting wood.

We've looked and looked, but after all where are we?  
Do we know any better where we are,  
And how it stands between the night to-night  
And a man with a smoky lantern chimney?  
How different from the way it ever stood?

## AN OUTLINE OF SCIENTISTS

by JAMES THURBER

HAVING BEEN LAID UP by a bumblebee for a couple of weeks, I ran through the few old novels there were in the cottage I had rented in Bermuda and finally was reduced to reading "The Outline of Science, a Plain Story Simply Told," in four volumes. These books were published by Putnam's fifteen years ago and were edited by J. Arthur Thomson, Regius Professor of Natural History at the University of Aberdeen. The volumes contained hundreds of articles written by various scientists and over eight hundred illustrations, forty of which, the editor bragged on the flyleaf, were in color. A plain story simply told with a lot of illustrations, many of them in color, seemed just about the right mental fare for a man who had been laid up by a bee. Human nature being what it is, I suppose the morbid reader is more interested in how I happened to be laid up by a bee than in what I found in my scientific research, so I will dismiss that unfortunate matter in a few words. The bee stung me in the foot and I got an infection (staphylococcus, for short). It was the first time in my life that anything smaller than a turtle had ever got the best of me, and naturally I don't like to dwell on it. I prefer to go on to my studies in "The Outline of Science," if everybody is satisfied.

I happened to pick up Volume IV first, and was presently in the midst of a plain and simple explanation of the Einstein theory, a theory about which in my time I have done as much talking as the next man, although I admit now that I never understood it very clearly. I understood

it even less clearly after I had tackled a little problem about a man running a hundred-yard dash and an aviator in a plane above him. Everything, from the roundness of the earth to the immortality of the soul, has been demonstrated by the figures of men in action, but here was a new proposition. It seems that if the aviator were traveling as fast as light, the stop watch held by the track judge would not, from the aviator's viewpoint, move at all. (You've got to make believe that the aviator could see the watch, which is going to be just as hard for you as it was for me.) You might think that this phenomenon of the unmoving watch hand would enable the runner to make a hundred yards in nothing flat, but, if so, you are living in a fool's paradise. To an aviator going as fast as light, the hundred-yard track would shrink to nothing at all. If the aviator were going *twice* as fast as light, the report of the track judge's gun would wake up the track judge, who would still be in bed in his pajamas, not yet having got up to go to the track meet. This last is my own private extension of the general theory, but it seems to me as sound as the rest of it.

I finally gave up the stop watch and the airplane, and went deeper into the chapter till I came to the author's summary of a scientific romance called "Lumen," by the celebrated French astronomer, M. Flammarion (in my youth, the Hearst Sunday feature sections leaned heavily on M. Flammarion's discoveries). The great man's lurid little romance deals, it seems, with a man who died in 1864 and whose soul

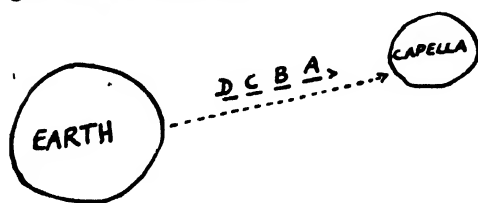
From *Let Your Mind Alone*, by James Thurber. Harper & Brothers. Reprinted by permission of Mr. Thurber.



## *Man Against Himself*

flew with the speed of thought to one of the stars in the constellation Capella. This star was so far from the earth that it took light rays seventy-two years to get there, hence the man's soul kept catching up with light rays from old historical events and passing them. Thus the man's soul was able to see the battle of Waterloo, fought backward. First the man's soul—oh, let's call him Mr. Lumen—first Mr. Lumen saw a lot of dead soldiers and then he saw them get up and start fighting. "Two hundred thousand corpses, come to life, marched off the field in perfect order," wrote M. Flammarion. Perfect order, I should think, only backward.

I kept going over and over this section of the chapter on the Einstein theory. I even tried reading it backward, twice as fast as light, to see if I could capture Napoleon at Waterloo while he was still home in bed. If you are interested in the profound mathematical theory of the distinguished German scientist, you may care to glance at a diagram I drew for my own guidance, as follows:



Now, A represents Napoleon entering the field at Waterloo and B represents his defeat there. The dotted line is, of course, Mr. Lumen, going hell-for-leather. C and D you need pay no particular attention to; the first represents the birth of Mr. George L. Snively, an obscure American engineer, in 1819, and the second the founding of the New England Glass Company, in

1826. I put them in to give the thing roundness and verisimilitude and to suggest that Mr. Lumen passed a lot of other events besides Waterloo.

In spite of my diagram and my careful reading and rereading of the chapter on the Einstein theory, I left it in the end with a feeling that my old grip on it, as weak as it may have been, was stronger than my new grip on it, and simpler, since it had not been mixed up with aviators, stop watches, Mr. Lumen, and Napoleon. The discouraging conviction crept over me that science was too much for me, that these brooding scientists, with their bewildering problems, many of which work backward, live on an intellectual level which I, who think of a hundred-yard dash as a hundred-yard dash, could never attain to. It was with relief that I drifted on to Chapter XXXVI, "The Story of Domesticated Animals." There wouldn't be anything in that going as fast as light or faster, and it was more the kind of thing that a man who has been put to bed by a bee should read for the alleviation of his humiliation. I picked out the section on dogs, and very shortly I came to this: "There are few dogs which do not inspire affection; many crave it. But there are some which seem to repel us, like the bloodhound. True, man has made him what he is. Terrible to look at and terrible to encounter, man has raised him up to hunt down his fellowman." Accompanying the article was a picture of a dignified and mournful-looking bloodhound, about as terrible to look at as Abraham Lincoln, about as terrible to encounter as Jimmy Durante.

Poor, frightened little scientist! I wondered who he was, this man whom Mr. J. Arthur Thomson, Regius Professor of Natural History at the University of Aber-

## *Space Being Curved*

deen, had selected to inform the world about dogs. Some of the chapters were signed, but this one wasn't, and neither was the one on the Einstein theory (you were given to understand that they had all been written by eminent scientists, however). I had the strange feeling that both of these articles had been written by the same man. I had the strange feeling that *all* scientists are the same man. Could it be possible that I had isolated here, as under a microscope, the true nature of the scientist? It pleased me to think so; it still pleases me to think so. I have never liked or trusted scientists very much, and I think now that I know why: they are afraid of bloodhounds. They must, therefore, be afraid of frogs, jack rabbits, and the larger pussycats. This must be the reason that most of them withdraw from the world and devote themselves to the study of the inanimate and the impalpable. Out of my analysis of those few sentences on the bloodhound, one of the gentlest of all breeds of dogs, I have arrived at what I call Thurber's Law, which is that scientists don't really know anything about anything. I doubt everything they have ever discovered. I don't think light has a speed of 7,000,000 miles per second at all (or whatever the legendary speed is). Scientists just think light is going that fast, because they are afraid of it. It's so terrible to look at. I have

always suspected that light just plodded along, and now I am positive of it.

I can understand how that big baby dropped the subject of bloodhounds with those few shuddering sentences, but I propose to scare him and his fellow-scientists a little more about the huge and feral creatures. Bloodhounds are sometimes put on the trail of old lost ladies or little children who have wandered away from home. When a bloodhound finds an old lady or a little child, he instantly swallows the old lady or the little child whole, clothes and all. This is probably what happened to Charlie Ross, Judge Crater, Agnes Tufverson, and a man named Colonel Appel, who disappeared at the battle of Shiloh. God only knows how many thousands of people bloodhounds have swallowed, but it is probably twice as many as the Saint Bernards have swallowed. As everybody knows, the Saint Bernards, when they find travelers fainting in the snow, finish them off. Monks have notoriously little to eat and it stands to reason they couldn't feed a lot of big, full-grown Saint Bernards; hence they sick them on the lost travelers, who would never get anywhere, anyway. The brandy in the little kegs the dogs wear around their necks is used by the Saint Bernards in drunken orgies that follow the killings.

I guess that's all I have to say to the scientists right now, except *bool*!

## SPACE BEING CURVED

by E. E. CUMMINGS

Space being(don't forget to remember)Curved  
(and that reminds me who said o yes Frost  
Something there is which isn't fond of walls)

Copyright, 1931, by E. E. Cummings. From *Collected Poems*, published by Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc.

## *Man Against Himself*

an electromagnetic (now I've lost  
the) Einstein expanded Newton's law preserved  
continuum (but we read that before)

of course life being just a Reflex you  
know since Everything is Relative or

to sum it All Up god being Dead (not to

mention in Terred)

LONG LIVE that Upwardlooking  
Serene Illustrious and Beatific  
Lord of Creation, MAN:

at a least crooking  
of Whose compassionate digit, earth's most terrific

quadruped swoons into billiard Balls!

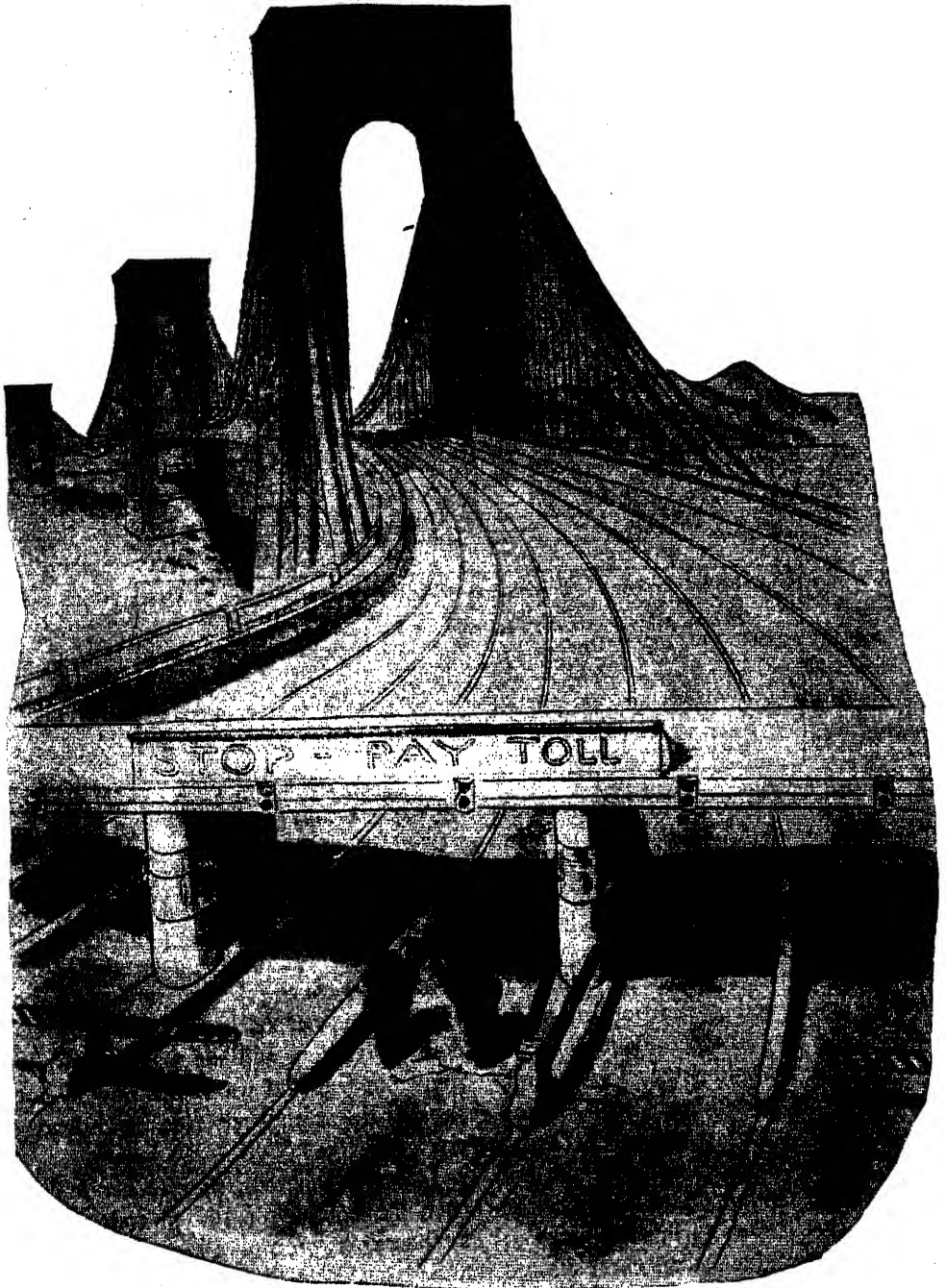
## O SWEET SPONTANEOUS

*by E. E. CUMMINGS*

O sweet spontaneous  
earth how often have  
the  
doting  
fingers of  
prurient philosophers pinched  
and  
poked  
thee  
, has the naughty thumb  
of science prodded  
thy  
beauty . how  
often have religions taken  
thee upon their scraggy knees

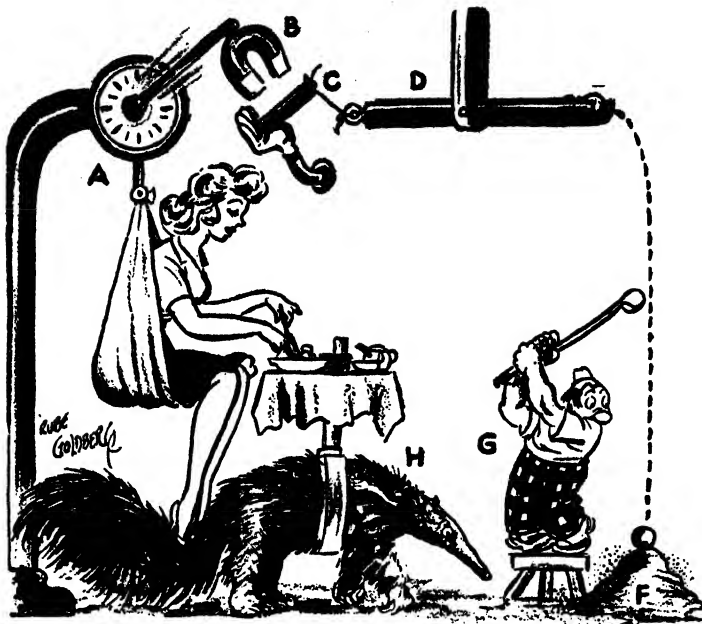
squeezing and  
buffeting thee that thou mightest  
conceive  
gods  
(but  
true  
to the incomparable  
couch of death thy  
rhythmic  
lover  
thou answerest  
them only with  
spring)

Copyright, 1923, by E. E. Cummings. From *Collected Poems*, published by Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc.



*"Well, it looks like a buttercup to me."*

*Permission The New Yorker. Copyright The F-R. Publishing Corporation.*



EVERY WOMAN TO HAVE A PERFECT FIGURE -  
SHE SITS DOWN TO EAT IN SCALE (A) - AS WEIGHT  
INCREASES, MAGNET (B) MOVES TOWARDS SMALL  
STEEL BAR (C), PICKING IT UP AND TILTING GROOVE (D) -  
GOLF BALL (E) DROPS ON ANT-HILL (F) - MIDGET  
BEGINNER (G) TAKES SWING AT BALL, MISSES IT AND  
KNOCKS CHUNK OUT OF ANT-HILL, SCATTERING ANTS -  
ANTEATER (H) GOES AFTER ANTS, MOVING TABLE  
AWAY FROM HUNGRY YOUNG LADY, ALLOWING HER TO  
PRESERVE HER BEAUTIFUL FIGURE.

Reprinted by special permission  
of The Bell Syndicate, Inc.

## MRS. SEMPLON'S FIFTH FREEDOM

by EDWARD LONGSTRETH

THE WAR was over and Mrs. Semplon was almost bursting with satisfaction and pride. She was the very first person in all Scarsdale to have a brand-new, all-in-one-unit kitchen. It had everything. Cost had been no object. She had saved up so much money she could not spend on things that were not for sale that she could afford the best, and the best was what she had.

Mrs. Semplon's life seemed complete and she had achieved the fifth freedom. She had, of course, been guaranteed freedom

of speech—which, if the truth must be told, she had never felt without—and freedom of religion, and she was chronically free from fear and want. But now at last she was free, completely free, from drudgery.

To reassure herself, she ran her fingers over the console of the gleaming new kitchen stove, pressing a key here, kicking a diapason there. She glanced at the array of clocks and dials, as intricate as the instrument panel of a Douglas transport.

Permission of *The New Yorker*. Copyright 1945, The F.R. Publishing Corporation.

### *Mrs. Semplon's Fifth Freedom*

She smiled at each transparent plastic pot and pan, garishly cooking its contents in full view of the world. She looked into the oven, brightly lighted to its farthest corner, and as she looked, the indicators of the dial on the pellucid oven door gave a slight lurch, showing that the time had come to increase the temperature inside.

The dinner things were arrayed on a large tray, which could be wheeled into the dining alcove and there become the dining-room table. Afterward, the dishes would wash themselves, in a sink filled with detergent and hot water, and, at the push of a button, would rinse and drain themselves.

With all the cupboards and electrical refrigeration and automatic everything, there would have been nothing whatever to complicate Mrs. Semplon's life if it had not been for the flower vases and highball glasses. These were of odd shapes and sizes and did not become soiled on any particular schedule, like dishes. They had to be cleaned at off times—at least, Mrs. Semplon thought they did. She was not the sort of woman to let dirty objects accumulate until it was time to wash dishes, and besides, she had found that her new dishwasher did not function well on only a few things. To wash the glasses and vases between meals was no great chore, and for the purpose Mrs. Semplon had always used a funny little brushy swab on a long handle, with a tiny loop on the end to hang it up by. But the new kitchen had no place designed for her little brushy swab, and when she started to drive a nail into the window frame above the sink, where she had always hung it and could reach for it without even thinking about it, she suddenly realized that everything in sight was made of metal or brittle plastic and that she

could no more drive a nail into it than she could into a pane of glass.

For days this perplexed and tormented Mrs. Semplon. She tried several resourceful schemes involving bobby pins, adhesive tape, and chewing gum, but none of them proved serviceable. She glared at her immaculate kitchen unit with a new feeling: the thing was uncoöperative. It was smug. It had dogmatized everything anyone could do in a kitchen and there was no place for free thinking and individuality.

Mrs. Semplon spent more and more time in the kitchen, but lost her interest in food. She lost weight, too, and she lost her amiable disposition. She took to going around the kitchen with a hammer and nail, tapping, tapping, determined to find its Achilles' heel, the chink in its armor.

Having gone over the whole interior many times, she was almost forced to admit that the new kitchen was more inflexible than her will. She could find no place to drive that nail. At last, flushed and angry with frustration, she opened the window above the sink. The thought came to her that she could build a little shed outside the window in which to lodge the swab. She tapped the window frame—she knew the sash was metal. The frame was metal, too. In anger she gave a vicious whack at the rim of the fly screen. An almost forgotten sound, as musical and soft and seductive as a muted 'cello, fell upon her ears. She used the hammer once more, and knew she had touched wood.

With a satisfaction not to be experienced short of redecorating an entire house, she drove her nail into the wooden screen and on it hung the swab. Of course, the window had to be opened to get at it, but that took little effort, and winter was a long way off.

## RATS ARE DRIVEN CRAZY BY INSOLUBLE PROBLEMS



This rat is suffering a severe nervous breakdown as a result of repeated frustration.

DOCTORS know that cerebral injuries, tumors, narcotics and syphilis can drive a man crazy. But baffling to today's scientists is the ever-mounting number of victims whose mental diseases can be traced to no physical cause. And because the cause is unknown, the cure is remote. An extremely important clue to this human puzzle was furnished recently by the experiments of Psychologist Norman Raymond Frederick Maier of the University of Michigan, who drives rats crazy by forcing them to cope with problems that cannot be solved.

Professor Maier first teaches his rats a routine which rewards them with food if successfully completed. A rat is taught to jump from a platform at one of two differently marked cards. If it hits the right card, the card topples over and the rat is rewarded by a good meal. If it hits the wrong card, which is stationary, it bumps

its nose and falls down. (See pages 113-114.)

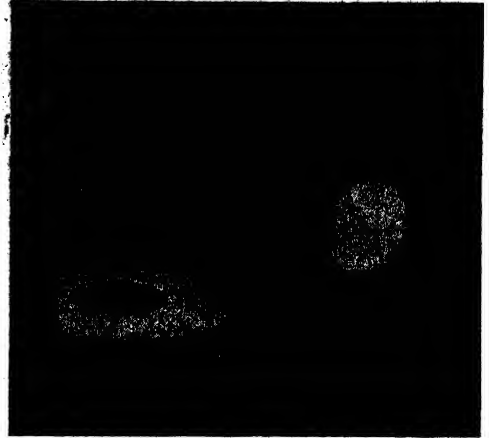
When the rat has learned to jump at the right card, Professor Maier suddenly changes the rat's orderly world into bewildering chaos by switching the cards or putting up only the wrong card. Guided by habit, the rat persistently jumps at the same door as before, bumps its nose, grows more and more nervous as it finds it is up against an insoluble problem. In desperation, it leaps off the platform and races around the floor, bounces about like a kangaroo. When it stops, exhausted, it goes into trembling convulsions, then falls into a coma.

From these experiments Professor Maier concludes that many human beings suffer nervous breakdowns when forced to solve problems which have no apparent solutions. To date the only possible cure is advice which will provide a solution for the patient.

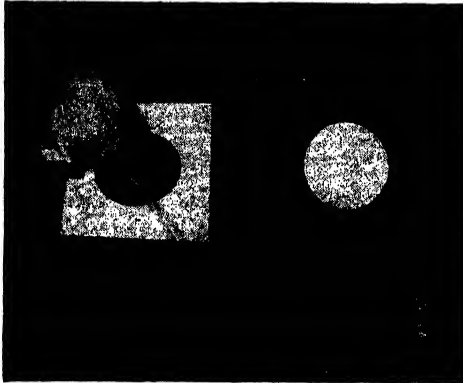
*Life*, March 6, 1939. Copyright, 1939, and reprinted by permission of *Life*.



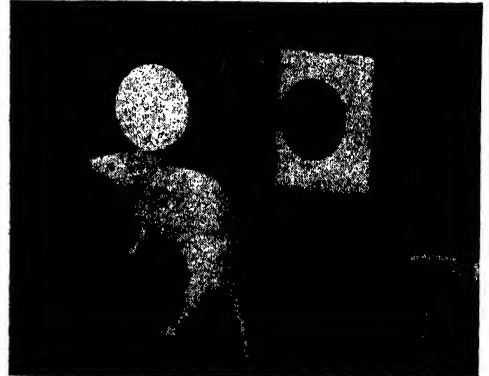
(1) A normal rat is faced with the problem of jumping at one of two cards. Air jet at tail forces it to leap.



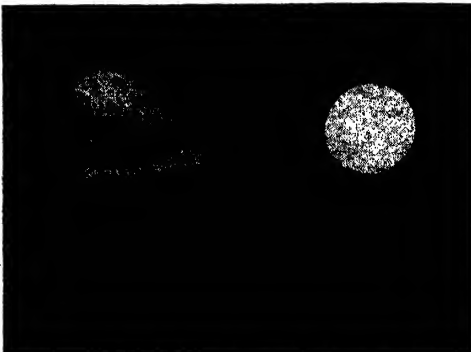
(4) Tasty food on a board behind the cards rewards the rat, leads to the habit of jumping through the door at left.



(2) The rat jumps to the left, pushing the mobile card inward. It scrambles hastily through the door to keep from falling.



(5) When the cards are reversed, the rat continues jumping to the left. Since the white circle card is fixed, the rat falls down.

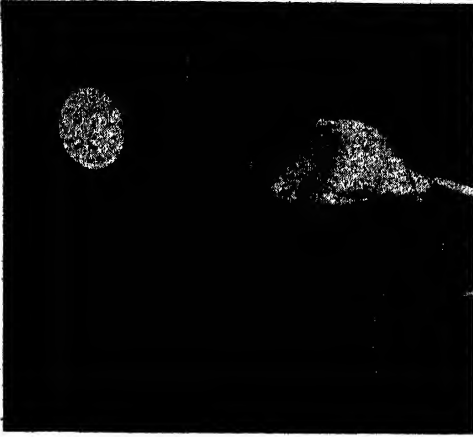


(3) The card topples over and the rat lands inside. It had previously jumped at other card and only bumped its nose.



(6) Even when door at right is open and the food visible the rat still jumps to left where it encounters a fixed card.





(7) Rat, now thoroughly baffled, refuses to jump at any card despite the blast of air which ruffles the fur on its rump.



(8) Weary after convulsions and frantic racing, this rat goes into a passive state, remains motionless even when rolled into a ball.

## “BOO!”

IN NEWARK more than 20 families wrapped their faces in wet towels to save themselves from the gas raid, tied up traffic with their calls for gas masks, inhalators, ambulances, police rescue squads. While a doughty little band of Princeton scientists set out to investigate the reported catastrophe, in Harlem the godly gathered in prayer. Eight hundred and seventy-five panic-stricken people phoned the New York *Times* alone.

St. Michael's Hospital, Newark, treated 15 people for shock. A man called the Dixie Bus Terminal, shouting, “The World is coming to an end and I've got a lot to do!” It was said that President Roosevelt was on the radio telling everybody to pack up and go north.

The editorial staff of the Memphis *Press-Scimitar* was recalled to its office to get out an extra edition on the bombing

of Chicago, St. Louis, the threatened bombing of Memphis. A brave Californian telephoned Oakland police that he was prepared to go East and repel the invader. In Providence frightened townsfolk demanded that the electric company black out the city to save it from the enemy. Pious Virginians telephoned the Richmond *Times-Dispatch* that they were praying.

A Pittsburgh woman snatched up a bottle of poison, screamed, “I'd rather die this way than like that.” Her husband stopped her. A man telephoned the New York *Times* from Dayton, Ohio, to find out exactly when the world was coming to an end. The Associated Press got out a reassuring bulletin.

The cause of this amazing, nationwide panic last Sunday night was a broadcast by Orson Welles's CBS Mercury Theatre

## *Paris in Panic*

of the Air of *The War of the Worlds* by H. G. Wells (no relative). Author Wells's classic pseudo-scientific thriller about how the men from Mars invade earth in a flying cylinder (at first thought to be a meteorite) was first published in 1898. That its broadcast on Hallowe'en Eve 1938 caused something pretty close to national hysteria was not entirely due to the timelessness of the Wells story, the persuasive microphone technique of Orson ("The Shadow") Welles or the stupidity of the U. S. radio audience.

The broadcast was begun with an announcement that a dramatization was taking place and was concluded by Mr. Welles's statement that it was "the Mercury Theatre's own version of dressing up in a sheet . . . and saying Boo!" But the story had been so realistically transplanted from Britain to the U. S., from the 19th to the 20th Century, that almost any listener who came in on a fragment might be pardoned for a momentary pricking up of the ears.

From the matter-of-fact voice of the militia officer who said he was at the crater caused by the cylinder and had everything under control, to the plaintive gasp of the

last radio operator calling into a void, the story and production had grip. But the only explanation for the badly panicked thousands—who evidently had neither given themselves the pleasure of familiarizing themselves with Wells's famous book nor had the wit to confirm or deny the catastrophe by dialing another station—is that recent concern over a possible European Armageddon has badly spooked the U. S. public.

At week's end FCC was flooded with indignant protests against Mr. Welles and CBS. In Germany the newspapers treated the unconscious hoax as a war scare. In the U. S. the press, no friend to radio, treated it as a public outrage. In London, Author Wells was a little shirty, too. He said: "It was implicit in the agreement that it was to be used as fiction and not news. I gave no permission whatever for alterations that might lead to belief that it was real news."

Said Bogeyman Welles: "Far from expecting the radio audience to take the program as fact rather than as a fictional presentation, we feared that the classic H. G. Wells fantasy . . . might appear too old-fashioned for modern consumption."

## PARIS IN PANIC OVER BROADCAST DESCRIBING ATOMIC DESTRUCTION

by JOHN MARTINCO

PARIS, Feb. 5. (U.P.)—Parisians awoke today to find the world still intact after a night of panic caused by a realistic radio broadcast describing the make-believe atomic disintegration of the globe.

Alarmed listeners surged into the streets last night when an announcer said that atomic waves were spreading across the Atlantic from the United States to Paris.

Hundreds converged on the studios of

*Watertown Daily Times*, Feb. 5, 1946. By permission of *Watertown Daily Times* and United Press Association.

## *Man Against Himself*

Radio Diffusion Française and the management appealed for police protection. Police guards were posted around the building.

Mothers hastily assembled children to be with them at the end. Cases of premature births were reported and there were unconfirmed reports of suicides.

Other terrified listeners flooded switchboards of the radio station, newspapers and police with calls.

The radio station tried to calm the public with repeated announcements that the broadcast was "purely imaginary" but listeners were hard to convince.

It was Orson Welles' pre-war broadcast of "Men From Mars" all over again.

The broadcast was conducted by Jean Noyer under the title "Platform 70 or the Atomic Age."

It began with a speech supposedly by an American professor describing the process of atomic disintegration.

The professor's speech ceased suddenly without explanation. Listeners were given to understand he had been disintegrated.

Roving reporters described scenes as final disintegration approached. One of these characters said:

"Can our learned men stop this catastrophe? In the streets people are kneeling in prayer. Destruction is drawing near."

"Well, you weren't too frightened, were you? It was a good joke, wasn't it? This was a production of Jean Noyer."

But the public was not amused and the station had to broadcast an explanation every 15 minutes for the rest of the night. It said:

"Our broadcast on the atomic age has provoked a certain emotion. We want to assure our listener it was a purely imaginary account."

Noyer, himself, could not be located after the broadcast. It was believed he had left town.

## THE DAY THE DAM BROKE

by JAMES THURBER

MY MEMORIES of what my family and I went through during the 1913 flood in Ohio I would gladly forget. And yet neither the hardships we endured nor the turmoil and confusion we experienced can alter my feeling toward my native state and city. I am having a fine time now and wish Columbus were here, but if anyone ever wished a city was in hell it was during that frightful and perilous afternoon in 1913 when the dam broke, or, to be more exact, when everybody in town thought that the dam broke. We

were both ennobled and demoralized by the experience. Grandfather especially rose to magnificent heights which can never lose their splendor for me, even though his reactions to the flood were based upon a profound misconception, namely, that Nathan Bedford Forrest's cavalry was the menace we were called upon to face. The only possible means of escape for us was to flee the house, a step which grandfather sternly forbade, brandishing his old army saber in his hand. "Let the sons — — come!" he roared.

From *My Life and Hard Times*, by James Thurber. Harper & Brothers. Originally appeared in *The New Yorker*. Copyright, 1933, by James Thurber and reprinted with his permission.

## *The Day the Dam Broke*

Meanwhile hundreds of people were streaming by our house in wild panic, screaming "Go east! Go east!" We had to stun grandfather with the ironing board. Impeded as we were by the inert form of the old gentleman—he was taller than six feet and weighed almost a hundred and seventy pounds—we were passed, in the first half-mile, by practically everybody else in the city. Had grandfather not come to, at the corner of Parsons Avenue and Town Street, we would unquestionably have been overtaken and engulfed by the roaring waters—that is, if there had *been* any roaring waters. Later, when the panic had died down and people had gone rather sheepishly back to their homes and their offices, minimizing the distances they had run and offering various reasons for running, city engineers pointed out that even if the dam had broken, the water level would not have risen more than two additional inches in the West Side. The West Side was, at the time of the dam scare, under thirty feet of water—as, indeed, were all Ohio river towns during the great spring floods of twenty years ago. The East Side (where we lived and where all the running occurred) had never been in any danger at all. Only a rise of some ninety-five feet could have caused the flood waters to flow over High Street—the thoroughfare that divided the east side of town from the west—and engulf the East Side.

The fact that we were all as safe as kittens under a cookstove did not, however, assuage in the least the fine despair and the grotesque desperation which seized upon the residents of the East Side when the cry spread like a grass fire that the dam had given way. Some of the most dignified, staid, cynical, and clear-thinking men in town abandoned their wives, stenographers, homes, and offices and ran

east. There are few alarms in the world more terrifying than "The dam has broken!" There are few persons capable of stopping to reason when that clarion cry strikes upon their ears, even persons who live in towns no nearer than five hundred miles to a dam.

The Columbus, Ohio, broken-dam rumor began, as I recall it, about noon of March 12, 1913. High Street, the main canyon of trade, was loud with the placid hum of business and the buzzing of placid businessmen arguing, computing, wheeling, offering, refusing, compromising. Darius Conningway, one of the foremost corporation lawyers in the Middle-West, was telling the Public Utilities Commission in the language of Julius Caesar that they might as well try to move the Northern star as to move him. Other men were making their little boasts and their little gestures. Suddenly somebody began to run. It may be that he had simply remembered, all of a moment, an engagement to meet his wife, for which he was now frightfully late. Whatever it was, he ran east on Broad Street (probably toward the Maramor Restaurant, a favorite place for a man to meet his wife). Somebody else began to run, perhaps a newsboy in high spirits. Another man, a portly gentleman of affairs, broke into a trot. Inside of ten minutes, everybody on High Street, from the Union Depot to the Courthouse was running. A loud mumble gradually crystallized into the dread word "dam." "The dam has broke!" The fear was put into words by a little old lady in an electric, or by a traffic cop, or by a small boy: nobody knows who, nor does it now really matter. Two thousand people were abruptly in full flight. "Go east!" was the cry that arose—east away from the river,

## *Man Against Himself*

east to safety. "Go east! Go east! Go east!"

Black streams of people flowed eastward down all the streets leading in that direction; these streams, whose headwaters were in the drygoods stores, office buildings, harness shops, movie theaters, were fed by trickles of housewives, children, cripples, servants, dogs, and cats, slipping out of the houses past which the main streams flowed, shouting and screaming. People ran out leaving fires burning and food cooking and doors wide open. I remember, however, that my mother turned out all the fires and that she took with her a dozen eggs and two loaves of bread. It was her plan to make Memorial Hall, just two blocks away, and take refuge somewhere in the top of it, in one of the dusty rooms where war veterans met and where old battle flags and stage scenery were stored. But the seething throngs, shouting "Go east!" drew her along and the rest of us with her. When grandfather regained full consciousness, at Parsons Avenue, he turned upon the retreating mob like a vengeful prophet and exhorted the men to form ranks and stand off the Rebel dogs, but at length he, too, got the idea that the dam had broken and, roaring "Go east!" in his powerful voice, he caught up in one arm a small child and in the other a slight clerkish man of perhaps forty-two and we slowly began to gain on those ahead of us.

A scattering of firemen, policemen, and army officers in dress uniforms—there had been a review at Fort Hayes, in the northern part of town—added color to the surging billows of people. "Go east!" cried a little child in a piping voice, as she ran past a porch on which drowsed a lieutenant-colonel of infantry. Used to quick decisions, trained to immediate obedience,

the officer bounded off the porch and, running at full tilt, soon passed the child, bawling "Go east!" The two of them emptied rapidly the houses of the little street they were on. "What is it? What is it?" demanded a fat, waddling man who intercepted the colonel. The officer dropped behind and asked the little child what it was. "The dam has broke!" gasped the girl. "The dam has broke!" roared the colonel. "Go east! Go east!" He was soon leading, with the exhausted child in his arms, a fleeing company of three hundred persons who had gathered around him from living-rooms, shops, garages, backyards, and basements.

Nobody has ever been able to compute with any exactness how many people took part in the great rout of 1913, for the panic, which extended from the Winslow Bottling Works in the south end to Clintonville, six miles north, ended as abruptly as it began and the bobtail and ragtag and velvet-gowned groups of refugees melted away and slunk home, leaving the streets peaceful and deserted. The shouting, weeping, tangled evacuation of the city lasted not more than two hours in all. Some few people got as far east as Reynoldsburg, twelve miles away; fifty or more reached the Country Club, eight miles away; most of the others gave up, exhausted, or climbed trees in Franklin Park, four miles out. Order was restored and fear dispelled finally by means of militiamen riding about in motor lorries bawling through megaphones: "The dam has *not* broken!" At first this tended only to add to the confusion and increase the panic, for many stampeders thought the soldiers were bellowing "The dam has now broken!", thus setting an official seal of authentication on the calamity.

All the time, the sun shone quietly and

## *The Day the Dam Broke*

there was nowhere any sign of oncoming waters. A visitor in an airplane, looking down on the straggling, agitated masses of people below, would have been hard put to it to divine a reason for the phenomenon. It must have inspired, in such an observer, a peculiar kind of terror, like the sight of the *Marie Celeste*, abandoned at sea, its galley fires peacefully burning, its tranquil decks bright in the sunlight.

An aunt of mine, Aunt Edith Taylor, was in a movie theater on High Street when, over and above the sound of the piano in the pit (a W. S. Hart picture was being shown), there rose the steadily increasing tramp of running feet. Persistent shouts rose above the tromping. An elderly man, sitting near my aunt, mumbled something, got out of his seat, and went up the aisle at a dogtrot. This started everybody. In an instant the audience was jamming the aisles. "Fire!" shouted a woman who always expected to be burned up in a theater; but now the shouts outside were louder and coherent. "The dam has broke!" cried somebody. "Go east!" screamed a small woman in front of my aunt. And east they went, emerging finally into the street, torn and sprawling. Inside the theater, Bill Hart was calmly calling some desperado's bluff and the brave girl at the piano played "Row! Row! Row!" loudly and then "In My Harem." Outside, men were streaming across the Statehouse yard, others were climbing trees, a woman managed to get up onto the "These Are My Jewels" statue, whose bronze figures of Sherman, Stanton, Grant, and Sheridan watched with cold unconcern the going to pieces of the capital city.

"I ran south to State Street, east on State to Third, south on Third to Town, and out east on Town," my aunt Edith has

written me. "A tall spare woman with grim eyes and a determined chin ran past me down the middle of the street. I was still uncertain as to what was the matter, in spite of all the shouting. I drew up alongside the woman with some effort, for although she was in her late fifties, she had a beautiful easy running form and seemed to be in excellent condition. 'What is it?' I puffed. She gave me a quick glance and then looked ahead again, stepping up her pace a trifle. 'Don't ask me, ask God!' she said.

"When I reached Grant Avenue, I was so spent that Dr. H. R. Mallory—you remember Dr. Mallory, the man with the white beard who looks like Robert Browning?—well, Dr. Mallory, whom I had drawn away from at the corner of Fifth and Town, passed me. 'It's got us!' he shouted, and I felt sure that whatever it was *did* have us, for you know what conviction Dr. Mallory's statements always carried. I didn't know at the time what he meant, but I found out later. There was a boy behind him on roller skates, and Dr. Mallory mistook the swishing of the skates for the sound of rushing water. He eventually reached the Columbus School for Girls, at the corner of Parsons Avenue and Town Street, where he collapsed, expecting the cold frothing waters of the Scioto to sweep him into oblivion. The boy on the skates swirled past him and Dr. Mallory realized for the first time what he had been running from. Looking back up the street, he could see no signs of water, but nevertheless, after resting a few minutes, he jogged east again. He caught up with me at Ohio Avenue, where we rested together. I should say that about seven hundred people passed us. A funny thing was that all of them were on foot. Nobody seemed to have had the courage

## *Man Against Himself*

to stop and start his car; but, as I remember it, all cars had to be cranked in those days, which is probably the reason."

The next day, the city went about its business as if nothing had happened, but there was no joking. It was two years or

more before you dared treat the breaking of the dam lightly. And even now, twenty years after, there are a few persons, like Dr. Mallory, who will shut up like a clam if you mention the Afternoon of the Great Run.

## NOTES AND COMMENT\*

SCIENCE got an even firmer grip on the tail of the bear a couple of weeks ago. A jet plane flew West to East between a late breakfast and a lunch; plans were announced for vaporizing a captive fleet to the accompaniment of thousand-mile-an-hour winds and hundred-foot waves (the possibility of a chain reaction, however, was said to be remote); and an electrical impulse, dispatched from Belmar, New Jersey, bounced back from the moon in 2.4 seconds. All this information made chilly reading over our morning coffee, which, of course, contained enough energy, if properly harnessed, to raise the Empire State Building three feet from its foundations, or just high enough so that a thoughtful man could crawl under it and lie down, but we were principally fascinated by the news about the moon, man's first tiny venture into the cold, appalling hole of interstellar space. Ever since we heard about it at our colored mammy's knee, we have believed obstinately in life on Mars, or at least on some

planet just a little further on, feeling that it was only childish arrogance that allowed us to think ourselves unique. It has also seemed to us likely, at least in the past few years, that the level of intelligence out there is infinitely advanced beyond our own, and now we have a sharp picture of a scientist on FX2, an older, wiser star, studying a pinprick on a revolving drum telling him of the triumphant experiment at Belmar.

"Pretty smart," we can hear him murmuring with cold surprise. "Pretty damn smart. You know, I was afraid they'd be getting around to that one of these days."

We can also imagine him coming to a reluctant but implacable decision and making the necessary adjustments on a dial.

"All right, Combo," he says to his assistant. "The chances are they'd blow themselves up first, but I guess we can't risk it. Get ready on your switch. I'll tell you when."

We hear a click and all the rest is gas.

\* *The New Yorker*, Feb. 9, 1946. Permission *The New Yorker*. Copyright 1946, The F.R. Publishing Corporation.

## YOU, ANDREW MARVELL

by ARCHIBALD MACLEISH

And here face down beneath the sun  
And here upon earth's noonward height  
To feel the always coming on  
The always rising of the night

To feel creep up the curving east  
The earthy chill of dusk and slow  
Upon those under lands the vast  
And ever climbing shadow grow

And strange at Ecbatan the trees  
Take leaf by leaf the evening strange  
The flooding dark about their knees  
The mountains over Persia change

And now at Kermanshah the gate  
Dark empty and the withered grass  
And through the twilight now the late  
Few travelers in the westward pass

And Baghdad darken and the bridge  
Across the silent river gone

And through Arabia the edge  
Of evening widen and steal on

And deepen on Palmyra's street  
The wheel rut in the ruined stone  
And Lebanon fade out and Crete  
High through the clouds and overblown

And over Sicily the air  
Still flashing with the landward gulls  
And loom and slowly disappear  
The sails above the shadowy hulls

And Spain go under and the shore  
Of Africa the gilded sand  
And evening vanish and no more  
The low pale light across that land

Nor now the long light on the sea

And here face downward in the sun  
To feel how swift how secretly  
The shadow of the night comes on . . .

## from THE HAMLET OF A. MACLEISH

by ARCHIBALD MACLEISH

Night after night I lie like this listening.  
Night after night I cannot sleep. I wake  
Knowing something, thinking something has happened.  
I have this feeling a great deal. I have  
Sadness often. At night I have this feeling.  
Waking I feel this pain as though I knew  
Something not to be thought of, something unbearable.  
I feel this pain at night as though some  
Terrible thing had happened. At night the sky  
Opens, the near things vanish, the bright walls  
Fall, and the stars were always there, and the dark

The selections from Archibald MacLeish's *Poems 1924-1933* are used by permission of the publishers, Houghton Mifflin Company.



## *Man Against Himself*

There and the cold and the stillness. I wake and stand  
A long time by the window. I always think  
The trees know the way they are silent. I always  
Think some one has spoken, some one has told me.  
Reading the books I always think so, reading  
Words overheard in the books, reading the words  
Like words in a strange language. I always hear  
Music like that. I almost remember with music . . .  
This is not what you think. It is not that. I swim  
Every day at the beach under the fig tree.  
I swim very well and far out. The smell  
Of pine comes over the water. The wind blurs  
Seaward. And afternoons I walk to the phare.  
Much of the time I do not think anything;  
Much of the time I do not even notice.  
And then, speaking, closing a door, I see  
Strangely as though I almost saw now, some  
Shape of things I have always seen, the sun  
White on a house and the windows open and swallows  
In and out of the wallpaper, the moon's face  
Faint by day in a mirror; I see some  
Changed thing that is telling, something that almost  
Tells—and this pain then, then this pain. And no  
Words, only these shapes of things that seem  
Ways of knowing what it is I am knowing.  
I write these things in books, on pieces of paper.  
I have written 'The wind rises . . .' I have written 'Bells  
Plunged in the wind . . .' I have written 'Like  
Doors . . .' 'Like evening . . .'  
It is always the same: I cannot read what the words say.  
It is always the same: there are signs and I cannot read them.  
There are empty streets and the blinds drawn and the sky  
Sliding in windows. There are lights before  
Dawn in the yellow transoms over the doors.  
There are steps that pass and pass all night that are always  
One, always the same step passing . . .  
I have traveled a great deal. I have seen at Homs  
The cranes over the river and Isfahan  
The fallen tiles in the empty garden, and Shiraz  
Far off, the cypresses under the hill.  
It is always the same. I have seen on the Kazvin road  
On the moon grey desert the leafless wind,  
The wind raging in moon-dusk. Or the light that comes  
Seaward with slow oars from the mouth of the Euphrates.

## *The Problem of Unbelief*

I have heard the nightingales in the thickets of Gilan,  
And at dawn, at Teheran, I have heard from the ancient  
Westward greying face of the wandering planet  
The voices calling the small new name of god,  
The voices answered with cockcrow, answered at dusk  
With the cry of jackals far away in the gardens.  
I have heard the name of the moon beyond those mountains.  
It is always the same. It is always as though some  
Smell of leaves had made me not quite remember;  
As though I had turned to look and there were no one.  
It has always been secret like that with me.  
Always something has not been said. Always  
The stones were there, the trees were there, the motionless  
Hills have appeared in the dusk to me, the moon  
Has stood a long time white and still in the window.  
Always the earth has been turned away from me hiding  
The veiled eyes and the wind in the leaves has not spoken . . .

As now the night is still. As the night now  
Stands at the farthest off of touch and like  
A raised hand held upon the empty air  
Means and is silent.

*Look! It waves me still . . .*

*I say Go on! Go on!*

As the whole night now  
Made visible behind this darkness seems  
To beckon to me . . .

## THE PROBLEM OF UNBELIEF

*by* WALTER LIPPMANN

### *1. Whirl Is King*

AMONG THOSE who no longer believe in the religion of their fathers, some are proudly defiant, and many are indifferent. But there are also a few, perhaps an increasing number, who feel that there is a vacancy in their lives. This inquiry deals

with their problem. It is not intended to disturb the serenity of those who are unshaken in the faith they hold, and it is not concerned with those who are still exhilarated by their escape from some stale orthodoxy. It is concerned with those who are perplexed by the consequences of their own irreligion. It deals with the

From Walter Lippmann, *A Preface to Morals*. By permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers.

problem of unbelief, not as believers are accustomed to deal with it, in the spirit of men confidently calling the lost sheep back into the fold, but as unbelievers themselves must, I think, face the problem if they face it candidly and without presumption.

When such men put their feelings into words they are likely to say that, having lost their faith, they have lost the certainty that their lives are significant, and that it matters what they do with their lives. If they deal with young people they are likely to say that they know of no compelling reason which certifies the moral code they adhere to, and that, therefore, their own preferences, when tested by the ruthless curiosity of their children, seem to have no sure foundation of any kind. They are likely to point to the world about them, and to ask whether the modern man possesses any criterion by which he can measure the value of his own desires, whether there is any standard he really believes in which permits him to put a term upon that pursuit of money, of power, and of excitement which has created so much of the turmoil and the squalor and the explosiveness of modern civilization.

These are, perhaps, merely the rationalizations of the modern man's discontent. At the heart of it there are likely to be moments of blank misgiving in which he finds that the civilization of which he is a part leaves a dusty taste in his mouth. He may be very busy with many things, but he discovers one day that he is no longer sure they are worth doing. He has been much preoccupied; but he is no longer sure he knows why. He has become involved in an elaborate routine of pleasures; and they do not seem to amuse him very much. He finds it hard to be-

lieve that doing any one thing is better than doing any other thing, or, in fact, that it is better than doing nothing at all. It occurs to him that it is a great deal of trouble to live, and that even in the best of lives the thrills are few and far between. He begins more or less consciously to seek satisfactions, because he is no longer satisfied, and all the while he realizes that the pursuit of happiness was always a most unhappy quest. In the later stages of his woe he not only loses his appetite, but becomes excessively miserable trying to recover it. And then, surveying the flux of events and the giddiness of his own soul, he comes to feel that Aristophanes must have been thinking of him when he declared that "Whirl is King, having driven out Zeus."

## *2. False Prophecies*

The modern age has been rich both in prophecies that men would at last inherit the kingdoms of this world, and in complaints at the kind of world they inherited. Thus Petrarch, who was an early victim of modernity, came to feel that he would "have preferred to be born in any other period" than his own; he tells us that he sought an escape by imagining that he lived in some other age. The Nineteenth Century, which begat us, was forever blowing the trumpets of freedom and providing asylums in which its most sensitive children could take refuge. Wordsworth fled from mankind to rejoice in nature. Chateaubriand fled from man to rejoice in savages. Byron fled to an imaginary Greece, and William Morris to the Middle Ages. A few tried an imaginary India. A few an equally imaginary China. Many fled to Bohemia, to Utopia, to the Golden West, and to the Latin

## *The Problem of Unbelief*

Quarter, and some, like James Thomson,  
to hell where they were

gratified to gain  
That positive eternity of pain  
Instead of this insufferable inane.

They had all been disappointed by the failure of a great prophecy. The theme of this prophecy had been that man is a beautiful soul who in the course of history had somehow become enslaved by

Scepters, tiaras, swords, and chains, and  
tomes

Of reasoned wrong, glozed on by ignorance, and they believed with Shelley that when "the loathsome mask has fallen," man, exempt from awe, worship, degree, the king over himself, would then be "free from guilt or pain." This was the orthodox liberalism to which men turned when they had lost the religion of their fathers. But the promises of liberalism have not been fulfilled. We are living in the midst of that vast dissolution of ancient habits which the emancipators believed would restore our birthright of happiness. We know now that they did not see very clearly beyond the evils against which they were rebelling. It is evident to us that their prophecies were pleasant fantasies which concealed the greater difficulties that confront men, when having won the freedom to do what they wish—that wish, as Byron said:

which ages have not yet subdued  
In man—to have no master save his mood, they are full of contrary moods and do not know what they wish to do. We have come to see that Huxley was right when he said that "a man's worst difficulties begin when he is able to do as he likes."

The evidences of these greater difficulties lie all about us: in the brave and brilliant atheists who have defied the Meth-

odist God, and have become very nervous; in the women who have emancipated themselves from the tyranny of fathers, husbands, and homes, and with the intermittent but expensive help of a psychoanalyst, are now enduring liberty as interior decorators; in the young men and women who are world-weary at twenty-two; in the multitudes who drug themselves with pleasure; in the crowds enfranchised by the blood of heroes who cannot be persuaded to take an interest in their destiny; in the millions, at last free to think without fear of priest or policeman, who have made the moving pictures and the popular newspapers what they are.

These are the prisoners who have been released. They ought to be very happy. They ought to be serene and composed. They are free to make their own lives. There are no conventions, no tabus, no gods, priests, princes, fathers, or revelations which they must accept. Yet the result is not so good as they thought it would be. The prison door is wide open. They stagger out into trackless space under a blinding sun. They find it nerve-racking. "My sensibility," said Flaubert, "is sharper than a razor's edge; the creaking of a door, the face of a bourgeois, an absurd statement set my heart to throbbing and completely upset me." They must find their own courage for battle and their own consolation in defeat. They complain, like Renan after he had broken with the Church, that the enchanted circle which embraced the whole of life is broken, and that they are left with a feeling of emptiness "like that which follows an attack of fever or an unhappy love affair." Where is my *home*? cried Nietzsche: "For it do I ask and seek, and have sought, but have not found it. O eternal everywhere, O eternal nowhere, O eternal in vain."

## *Man Against Himself*

To more placid temperaments the pangs of freedom are no doubt less acute. It is possible for multitudes in time of peace and security to exist agreeably—somewhat incoherently, perhaps, but without convulsions—to dream a little and not unpleasantly, to have only now and then a nightmare, and only occasionally a rude awakening. It is possible to drift along not too discontentedly, somewhat nervously, somewhat anxiously, somewhat confusedly, hoping for the best, and believing in nothing very much. It is possible to be a passable citizen. But it is not possible to be wholly at peace. For serenity of soul requires some better organization of life than a man can attain by pursuing his casual ambitions, satisfying his hungers, and for the rest accepting destiny as an idiot's tale in which one dumb sensation succeeds another to no known end. And it is not possible for him to be wholly alive. For that depends upon his sense of being completely engaged with the world, with all his passions and all the faculties in rich harmonies with one other, and in deep rhythm with the nature of things.

These are the gifts of a vital religion which can bring the whole of a man into adjustment with the whole of his relevant experience. Our forefathers had such a religion. They quarreled a good deal about the details, but they had no doubt that there was an order in the universe which justified their lives because they were a part of it. The acids of modernity have dissolved that order for many of us, and there are some in consequence who think that the needs which religion fulfilled have also been dissolved. But however self-sufficient the eugenic and perfectly educated man of the distant future may be, our present experience is that the needs remain. In failing to meet them, it is plain that we have succeeded only in substitut-

ing trivial illusions for majestic faiths. For while the modern emancipated man may wonder how anyone ever believed that in this universe of stars and atoms and multitudinous life, there is a drama in progress of which the principal event was enacted in Palestine nineteen hundred years ago, it is not really a stranger fable than many which he so readily accepts. He does not believe the words of the Gospel but he believes the best-advertised notion. The older fable may be incredible today, but when it was credible it bound together the whole of experience upon a stately and dignified theme. The modern man has ceased to believe in it but he has not ceased to be credulous, and the need to believe haunts him. It is no wonder that his impulse is to turn back from his freedom, and to find someone who says he knows the truth and can tell him what to do, to find the shrine of some new god, of any cult however newfangled, where he can kneel and be comforted, put on manacles to keep his hands from trembling, ensconce himself in some citadel where it is safe and warm.

For the modern man who has ceased to believe, without ceasing to be credulous, hangs, as it were, between heaven and earth, and is at rest nowhere. There is no theory of the meaning and value of events which he is compelled to accept, but he is none the less compelled to accept the events. There is no moral authority to which he must turn now, but there is coercion in opinions, fashions and fads. There is for him no inevitable purpose in the universe, but there are elaborate necessities, physical, political, economic. He does not feel himself to be an actor in a great and dramatic destiny, but he is subject to the massive powers of our civilization, forced to adopt their pace, bound to their routine, entangled in their conflicts. He

## *The Problem of Unbelief*

can believe what he chooses about this civilization. He cannot, however, escape the compulsion of modern events. They compel his body and his senses as ruthlessly as ever did king or priest. They do not compel his mind. They have all the force of natural events, but not their majesty, all the tyrannical power of ancient institutions, but none of their moral certainty. Events are there, and they overpower him. But they do not convince him that they have that dignity which inheres in that which is necessary and in the nature of things.

In the old order the compulsions were often painful, but there was sense in the pain that was inflicted by the will of an all-knowing God. In the new order the compulsions are painful and, as it were, accidental, unnecessary, wanton, and full of mockery. The modern man does not make his peace with them. For in effect he has replaced natural piety with a grudging endurance of a series of unsanctified compulsions. When he believed that the unfolding of events was a manifestation of the will of God, he could say: Thy will be done. . . . In His will is our peace. But when he believes that events are determined by the votes of a majority, the orders of his bosses, the opinions of his neighbors, the laws of supply and demand, and the decisions of quite selfish men, he yields because he has to yield. He is conquered but unconvinced.

### *3. Sorties and Retreats*

It might seem as if, in all this, men were merely going through once again what they have often gone through before. This is not the first age in which the orthodox religion has been in conflict with the science of the day. Plato was born into such

an age. For two centuries the philosophers of Greece had been critical of Homer and of the popular gods, and when Socrates faced his accusers, his answer to the accusation of heresy must certainly have sounded unresponsive. "I do believe," he said, "that there are gods, and in a higher sense than that in which my accusers believe in them." That is all very well. But to believe in a "higher sense" is also to believe in a different sense.

There is nothing new in the fact that men have ceased to believe in the religion of their fathers. In the history of Catholic Christianity, there has always existed a tradition, extending from the author of the Fourth Gospel through Origen to the neo-Platonists of modern times, which rejects the popular idea of God as a power acting upon events, and of immortality as everlasting life, and translates the popular theology into a symbolic statement of a purely spiritual experience. In every civilized age there have been educated and discerning men who could not accept literally and simply the traditions of the ancient faith. We are told that during the Periclean Age "among educated men everything was in dispute: political sanctions, literary values, moral standards, religious convictions, even the possibility of reaching any truth about anything." When the educated classes of the Roman world accepted Christianity they had ceased to believe in the pagan gods, and were much too critical to accept the primitive Hebraic theories of the creation, the redemption, and the Messianic Kingdom which were so central in the popular religion. They had to do what Socrates had done; they had to take the popular theology in a "higher" and therefore in a different sense before they could use it. Indeed, it is so unusual to find an age of active-minded men in which the most highly educated are genuinely

## *Man Against Himself*

orthodox in the popular sense, that the Thirteenth Century, the age of Dante and St. Thomas Aquinas, when this phenomenon is reputed to have occurred, is regarded as a unique and wonderful period in the history of the world. It is not at all unlikely that there never was such an age in the history of civilized men.

And yet, the position of modern men who have broken with the religion of their fathers is in certain profound ways different from that of other men in other ages. This is the first age, I think, in the history of mankind when the circumstances of life have conspired with the intellectual habits of the time to render any fixed and authoritative belief incredible to large masses of men. The dissolution of the old modes of thought has gone so far, and is so cumulative in its effect, that the modern man is not able to sink back after a period of prophesying into a new but stable orthodoxy. The irreligion of the modern world is radical to a degree for which there is, I think, no counterpart. For always in the past it has been possible for new conventions to crystallize, and for men to find rest and surcease of effort in accepting them.

We often assume, therefore, that a period of dissolution will necessarily be followed by one of conformity, that the heterodoxy of one age will become the orthodoxy of the next, and that when this orthodoxy decays a new period of prophesying will begin. Thus we say that by the time of Hosea and Isaiah the religion of the Jews had become a system of rules for transacting business with Jehovah. The Prophets then revived it by thundering against the conventional belief that religion was mere burnt offering and sacrifice. A few centuries passed and the religion based on the Law and the Prophets had in its turn become a set of mechanical rites manipu-

lated by the Scribes and the Pharisees. As against this system Jesus and Paul preached a religion of grace, and against the "letter" of the synagogues the "spirit" of Christ. But the inner light which can perceive the spirit is rare, and so shortly after the death of Paul, the teaching gradually ceased to appeal to direct inspiration in the minds of the believers and became a body of dogma, a "sacred deposit" of the faith "once for all delivered to the saints." In the succeeding ages there appeared again many prophets who thought they had within them the revealing spirit. Though some of the prophets were burnt, much of the prophesying was absorbed into the canon. In Luther this sense of revelation appeared once more in a most confident form. He rejected the authority not only of the Pope and the clergy, but even of the Bible itself, except where in his opinion the Bible confirmed his faith. But in the establishment of a Lutheran Church the old difficulty reappeared: the inner light which had burned so fiercely in Luther did not burn brightly or steadily in all Lutherans, and so the right of private judgment, even in Luther's restricted use of the term, led to all kinds of heresies and abominations. Very soon there came to be an authoritative teaching backed by the power of the police. And in Calvinism the revolt of the Reformation became stabilized to the last degree. "Everything," said Calvin, "pertaining to the perfect rule of a good life the Lord has so comprehended in His law that there remains nothing for man to add to that summary."

Men fully as intelligent as the most emancipated among us once believed that, and I have no doubt that the successors of Mr. Darrow and Mr. Mencken would come to believe something very much like it if conditions permitted them to obey the instinct to retreat from the chaos of

## *The Problem of Unbelief*

modernity into order and certainty. It is all very well to talk about being the captain of your soul. It is hard, and only a few heroes, saints, and geniuses have been the captains of their souls for any extended period of their lives. Most men, after a little freedom, have preferred authority with the consoling assurances and the economy of effort which it brings. "If, outside of Christ, you wish by your own thoughts to know your relation to God, you will break your neck. Thunder strikes him who examines." Thus spoke Martin Luther, and there is every reason to suppose that the German people thought he was talking the plainest common sense. "He who is gifted with the heavenly knowledge of faith," said the Council of Trent, "is free from an inquisitive curiosity." These words are rasping to our modern ears, but there is no occasion to doubt that the men who uttered them had made a shrewd appraisal of average human nature. The record of experience is one of sorties and retreats. The search for moral guidance which shall not depend upon external authority has invariably ended in the acknowledgment of some new authority.

### *4. Deep Dissolution*

This same tendency manifests itself in the midst of our modern uneasiness. We have had a profusion of new cults, of revivals, and of essays in reconstruction. But there is reason for thinking that a new crystallization of an enduring and popular religion is unlikely in the modern world. For analogy drawn from the experience of the past is misleading.

When Luther, for example, rebelled against the authority of the Church, he did not suppose the way of life for the

ordinary man would be radically altered. Luther supposed that men would continue to behave much as they had learned to behave under the Catholic discipline. The individual for whom he claimed the right of private judgment was one whose prejudgments had been well fixed in a Catholic society. The authority of the Pope was to be destroyed and certain evils abolished, but there was to remain that feeling for objective moral certainties which Catholicism had nurtured. When the Anabaptists carried the practice of his theory beyond this point, Luther denounced them violently. For what he believed in was Protestantism for good Catholics. The reformers of the Eighteenth Century made a similar assumption. They really believed in democracy for men who had an aristocratic training. Jefferson, for example, had an instinctive fear of the urban rabble, that most democratic part of the population. The society of free men which he dreamed about was composed of those who had the discipline, the standards of honor and the taste, without the privileges or the corruptions, that are to be found in a society of well-bred country gentlemen.

The more recent rebels frequently betray a somewhat similar inability to imagine the consequences of their own victories. For the smashing of idols is in itself such a preoccupation that it is almost impossible for the iconoclast to look clearly into a future when there will not be many idols left to smash. Yet that future is beginning to be our present, and it might be said that men are conscious of what modernity means insofar as they realize that they are confronted not so much with the necessity of promoting rebellion as of dealing with the consequences of it. The Nineteenth Century, roughly speaking the time between Voltaire and Mencken,



## *Man Against Himself*

was an age of terrific indictments and of feeble solutions. The Marxian indictment of capitalism is a case in point. The Nietzschean transvaluation of values is another; it is magnificent, but who can say, after he has shot his arrow of longing to the other shore, whether he will find Caesar Borgia, Henry Ford, or Isadora Duncan? Who knows, having read Mr. Mencken and Mr. Sinclair Lewis, what kind of world will be left when all the boobs and yokels have crawled back in their holes and have died of shame?

The rebel, while he is making his attack, is not likely to feel the need to answer such questions. For he moves in an unreal environment, one might almost say a parasitic environment. He goes forth to destroy Caesar, Mammon, George F. Babbitt, and Mrs. Grundy. As he wrestles with these demons, he leans upon them. By inversion they offer him much the same kind of support which the conformer enjoys. They provide him with an objective which enables him to know exactly what he thinks he wants to do. His energies are focused by his indignation. He does not suffer from emptiness, doubt, and division of soul. These are the maladies which come later when the struggle is over. While the rebel is in conflict with the established nuisances he has an aim in life which absorbs all his passions. He has his own sense of righteousness and his own feeling of communion with a grand purpose. For in attacking idols there is a kind of piety, in overthrowing tyrants a kind of loyalty, in ridiculing stupidities an imitation of wisdom. In the heat of battle the rebel is exalted by a wholehearted tension which is easily mistaken for a taste of the freedom that is to come. He is under the spell of an illusion. For what comes after the struggle is not the

exaltation of freedom but a letting down of the tension that belongs solely to the struggle itself. The happiness of the rebel is as transient as the iconoclasm which produced it. When he has slain the dragon and rescued the beautiful maiden, there is usually nothing left for him to do but write his memoirs and dream of a time when the world was young.

What most distinguishes the generation who have approached maturity since the debacle of idealism at the end of the War is not their rebellion against the religion and the moral code of their parents, but their disillusionment with their own rebellion. It is common for young men and women to rebel, but that they should rebel sadly and without faith in their own rebellion, that they should distrust the new freedom no less than the old certainties—that is something of a novelty. As Mr. Canby once said, at the age of seven they saw through their parents and characterized them in a phrase. At fourteen they saw through education and dodged it. At eighteen they saw through morality and stepped over it. At twenty they lost respect for their home towns, and at twenty-one they discovered that our social system is ridiculous. At twenty-three the autobiography ends because the author has run through society to date and does not know what to do next. For, as Mr. Canby might have added, the idea of reforming that society makes no appeal to them. They have seen through all that. They cannot adopt any of the synthetic religions of the Nineteenth Century. They have seen through all of them.

They have seen through the religion of nature to which the early romantics turned for consolation. They have heard too much about the brutality of natural selection to feel, as Wordsworth did, that pleasant

## *The Problem of Unbelief*

landscapes are divine. They have seen through the religion of beauty because, for one thing, they are too much oppressed by the ugliness of Main Street. They cannot take refuge in an ivory tower because the modern apartment house, with a radio loudspeaker on the floor above and on the floor below and just across the courtyard, will not permit it. They cannot, like Mazzini, make a religion of patriotism, because they have just been demobilized. They cannot make a religion of science like the post-Darwinians because they do not understand modern science. They never learned enough mathematics and physics. They do not like Bernard Shaw's religion of creative evolution because they have read enough to know that Mr. Shaw's biology is literary and evangelical. As for the religion of progress, that is pre-empted by George F. Babbitt and the Rotary Club, and the religion of humanity is utterly unacceptable to those who have to ride in the subways during the rush hour.

Yet the current attempts to modernize religious creeds are inspired by the hope that somehow it will be possible to construct a form of belief which will fit into this vacuum. It is evident that life soon becomes distracted and tiresome if it is not illuminated by communion with what William James called "a wider self through which saving experiences come." The eager search for new religions, the hasty adherence to cults, and the urgent appeals for a reconciliation between religion and science are confessions that to the modern man his activity seems to have no place in any rational order. His life seems mere restlessness and compulsion, rather than, conduct lighted by luminous beliefs. He is possessed by a great deal of excitement amidst which, as Mr. Santayana once re-

marked, he redoubles his effort when he has forgotten his aim.

For in the modern age, at first imperceptibly with the rise of the towns, and then catastrophically since the mechanical revolution, there have gone into dissolution not only the current orthodoxy, but the social order and the ways of living which supported it. Thus rebellion and emancipation have come to mean something far more drastic than they have ever meant before. The earlier rebels summoned men from one allegiance to another, but the feeling for certainty in religion and for decorum in society persisted. In the modern world it is this very feeling of certainty itself which is dissolving. It is dissolving not merely for an educated minority but for everyone who comes within the orbit of modernity.

Yet there remain the wants which orthodoxy of some sort satisfies. The natural man, when he is released from restraints, and has no substitute for them, is at sixes and sevens with himself and the world. For in the free play of his uninhabited instincts he does not find any natural substitute for those accumulated convictions which, however badly they did it, nevertheless organized his soul, economized his effort, consoled him, and gave him dignity in his own eyes because he was part of some greater whole. The acids of modernity are so powerful that they do not tolerate a crystallization of ideas which will serve as a new orthodoxy into which men can retreat. And so the modern world is haunted by a realization, which it becomes constantly less easy to ignore, that it is impossible to reconstruct an enduring orthodoxy, and impossible to live well without the satisfactions which an orthodoxy would provide.



*Painting by Aaron Bohrod. Courtesy Life.*

Military necessity hung these Signal Corps wires on cross outside Pont-l'Abbé. . . . An MP directs traffic from the steps as a Sherman tank races up the road at the left. The Americans got this area on the south coast of Brittany cheap, with the help of the Maquis. The damage done here in the fighting was far less than these towns suffered in the ruthless religious wars of the seventeenth century.

## PART IV · TRADITION AND SOCIAL CHANGE

THE PROBLEM of man's belief or unbelief extends from the sources of his power to his confidence in himself and in his ability to live amicably in his community. He wants to know, with Beard, where he is going and whether he has any choice in the matter. He asks: Does the choice reside in events or in people? Do men make history? Einstein, Welles, and the late President Roosevelt assure us not only that men do make history but that men must make history. These three offer us different versions of the means by which we shall achieve that history, but they insist upon the same ends and resist the panic of indecision.

History, however, works both ways; it makes us as we make it. If we want to grow with the history that we are making, we must accept change as part of the "nature of things," rejecting or reinterpreting the guides of the past in the working tradition of the present. The pangs of change affect many: Auden gives us the landscape of depression and Robinson shows us the tragedy of the technologically obsolete. The acceptance of change entails the knowledge of its cause, in Steinbeck's conflict between those who own the land and those who care for it, as well as an awareness of its effects on land and people, as in the accompanying photographs. We find ourselves in the midst of the conflicting forces of change, confronting prejudice and fear. The sober, scientific analysis of one of these problems, in *The Races of Mankind*, persuades us to bring the social intelligence abreast of the changes we see around us every day.

The resistance against change implied by Adams does, in fact, recognize the existence of change. And Chase tells us that really we have nothing to fear, that since we cannot avoid change it is much better to deal with it in terms of our own day, recognizing the "technological imperative," than to resist in terms of a now lost memory of the past. Nostalgia may become our own worst enemy. As Sokolsky reminds us of the conservative's position, the need for a brake on change, we hear Jefferson and Macaulay speak out of the past for a belief in a way of thinking that transcends opinion and attitude. But such a sane and rational view is not always the lot of men, and Mary Petty shows us that even the best solutions are temporary when both sides of a conflict want the same ends but refuse to agree on how to achieve them.

# WHITHER MANKIND?

by CHARLES A. BEARD

WHAT IS CALLED Western or modern civilization by way of contrast with the civilization of the Orient or medieval times is at bottom a civilization that rests upon machinery and science as distinguished from one founded on agriculture or handicraft commerce. It is in reality a technological civilization. It is only about two hundred years old, and, far from shrinking in its influence, is steadily extending its area into agriculture as well as handicrafts. If the records of patent offices, the statistics of production, and the reports of laboratories furnish evidence worthy of credence, technological civilization, instead of showing signs of contraction, threatens to overcome and transform the whole globe.

Considered with respect to its intrinsic nature, technological civilization presents certain precise characteristics. It rests fundamentally on power-driven machinery which transcends the physical limits of its human directors, multiplying indefinitely the capacity for the production of goods. Science in all its branches—physics, chemistry, biology, and psychology—is the servant and upholder of this system. The day of crude invention being almost over, continuous research in the natural sciences is absolutely necessary to the extension of the machine and its market, thus forcing continuously the creation of new goods, new processes, and new modes of life. As the money for learning comes in increasing proportions from taxes on industry and gifts by captains of capitalism, a steady growth in scientific endowments is to be expected, and the scientific curiosity thus

aroused and stimulated will hardly fail to expand—and to invade all fields of thought with a technique of ever-refining subtlety. Affording the demand for the output of industry are the vast populations of the globe; hence mass production and marketing are inevitable concomitants of the machine routine.

For the present, machine civilization is associated with capitalism, under which large-scale production has risen to its present stage, but machine civilization is by no means synonymous with capitalism—that ever-changing scheme of exploitation. While the acquisitive instinct of the capitalist who builds factories and starts mass production is particularly emphasized by economists and is, no doubt, a factor of immense moment, it must not be forgotten that the acquisitive passion of the earth's multitudes for the goods, the comforts, and the securities of the classes is an equal, if not a more important, force, and in any case is likely to survive capitalism as we know it. Few choose nakedness when they can be clothed, the frosts of winter when they can be warm, or the misery of bacterial diseases when sanitation is offered to them. In fact, the ascetics and flagellants of the world belong nowhere in the main stream of civilization—and are of dubious utility and service in any civilization.

Though machine civilization has here been treated as if it were an order, it in fact differs from all others in that it is highly dynamic, containing within itself the seeds of constant reconstruction. Everywhere agricultural civilizations of the pre-

From Charles A. Beard, *Whither Mankind?*, Longmans, Green and Company, Inc.

## Whither Mankind?

machine age have changed only slowly with the fluctuations of markets, the fortunes of governments, and the vicissitudes of knowledge, keeping their basic institutions intact from century to century. Pre-machine urban civilizations have likewise retained their essential characteristics through long lapses of time. But machine civilization based on technology, science, invention, and expanding markets must of necessity change—and rapidly. The order of steam is hardly established before electricity invades it; electricity hardly gains a fair start before the internal combustion engine overtakes it. There has never been anywhere in the world any order comparable with it, and all analogies drawn from the Middle Ages, classical antiquity, and the Orient are utterly inapplicable to its potentialities, offering no revelations as to its future.

### II

Granted that these essential characteristics of so-called Western civilization—namely, its mechanical and scientific foundations—are realistic, is it a mere “flash in the pan,” an historical accident destined to give way to some other order based upon entirely different modes of life, lifting mankind “above the rudeness of the savage”? Now, if the term “decline” in this connection means anything concrete, it signifies the gradual or rapid abandonment of the material modes of production prevailing in any particular age and the habits and arts associated with them. Conceivably the Prussianism of the Hohenzollerns, described so well in Spengler’s *Prussianism and Socialism*, may decline—is declining. It is highly probable that the petty tenure system of the French peasantry, the now sadly diluted aristocracy

inherited from the eighteenth century, the church of little mysteries and miracles may decline, but these things are not the peculiar characteristics of the West. They are the remnants of the agricultural complex which the machine is everywhere steadily subduing. The real question is this: Can and will machine society “decline”?

It is generally agreed among historians that the decay of agriculture, owing to the lack of scientific management and fertilization, was one of the chief causes for the breakdown of the Roman state. Is it to be supposed that the drive of the masses of mankind for machine-made goods will fail, that large-scale production will be abandoned, that the huge literature of natural science will disappear in the same fashion as most of the literature of ancient Egypt, that the ranks of scientific men will cease in time to be recruited, that the scientific power to meet new situations will fail? An affirmative answer requires a great deal of hardihood. The scientific order is not recruited from a class, such as the patricians of ancient Rome; nor is scientific knowledge the monopoly of a caste likely to dissolve. Unless all visible signs deceive us, there is no reason for supposing that either machinery or science will disappear or even dwindle to insignificance. And they are the basis of the modern civilization.

If Western civilization does not break down from such internal causes, is there good reason for supposing that any of the races now inhabiting Asia or Africa could overcome the machine order of the West by any process, peaceful or warlike, without themselves adopting the technical apparatus of that order? No doubt, some of them are already borrowing various features of machine society, but slowly and

with indifferent success. The most efficient of them, the Japanese, still rely largely upon the West for a substantial part of their mechanical outfit—for inventiveness and creative mechanical skill. Unless there is a material decline in Western technology—and no evidence of such a slump is now in sight—then it may be safely contended that none of the agricultural civilizations of Asia or Africa will ever catch up with the scientific development of the West. As things stand at present, none of them gives any promise of being able to overrun the West as the conquerors of Rome overran the provinces of that empire. Certainly there is not likely to be, in any future that we can foresee, such an equality of armaments as existed between the best of the Roman legions and the forces of their conquerors. Hence the downfall of the West through conquest may fairly be ruled out of the possibilities of the coming centuries. If, in due time, the East smashes the West on the battlefield, it will be because the East has completely taken over the technology of the West, gone it one better, and thus become Western in civilization. In that case machine civilization will not disappear but will make a geographical shift.

Defining civilization narrowly in terms of letters and art, are the probabilities of a "decline" more numerous? Here we approach a more debatable, more intangible, topic. With reference to letters, taking into account the evidence of the last fifty years, there is no sign of a decay—at all events, a decay like that which occurred between the first and the sixth century in Roman history. Indeed, there are many cautious critics who tell us that the writers of the past hundred years, with the machine system at a high pitch, may be compared in

number, competence, and power without fear with the writers of any century since the appearance of the Roman grand style. Granted that we have no Horace, Shakespeare, or Goethe, we may reasonably answer that literature of their manner has little meaning for a civilization founded on a different basis. Considered in relation to their environment rather than some fictitious absolute, the best of modern writers, it may well be argued, rank with the best of the Middle Ages and antiquity. If poetry sinks in the scale and tragedy becomes comical, it may be because the mythology upon which they feed is simply foreign to the spirit of the machine age—not because there has been a dissolution of inherited mental powers. The imagination of an Einstein, a Bohr, or a Millikan may well transcend that of a Milton or a Virgil. Who is to decide?

The case of the arts is on a similar footing. For the sake of the argument, it may be conceded that the machine age has produced nothing comparable with the best of the painting, sculpture, and architecture of antiquity and the Middle Ages. What does that signify? Anything more than a decline in the arts appropriate to an agricultural and market-city era? The machine age is young. As yet it can hardly be said to have created an art of its own, although there are signs of great competence, if not genius, about us—signs of a new art appropriate to speed, mechanics, motion, railway stations, factories, office buildings, and public institutions. Using the lowest common denominator in the reckoning, there is no evidence of a decay in artistic power such as appears in the contrast between the Pantheon of Agrippa and the rude churches of Saxon England. To say that the modern age has produced

## *Whither Mankind?*

no ecclesiastical architecture comparable with that of the Middle Ages is to utter a judgment as relevant to our situation as a statement that the medieval times can show no aqueducts or baths equal to the noblest structures of pagan Rome. It may be that the machine age will finally prove to be poor in artistic genius—a debatable point—but it can hardly be said that it has produced its typical art, from which a decline may be expected.

Passing to a more tangible subject, is it possible that machine civilization may be destroyed by internal revolutions or civil wars such as have often wrecked great states in the past? That such disturbances will probably arise in the future from time to time cannot be denied, and the recent Bolshevik Revolution in Russia is often cited as a warning to contemporary statesmen. If the revolutions of antiquity be taken as illustrations, it must be pointed out that the analogies are to be used with extreme care in all applications to the machine age. When the worst has been said about the condition of the industrial proletariat, it must be conceded that as regards material welfare, knowledge, social consideration, and political power, it is far removed from the proletariat of Rome or the slaves of a more remote antiquity. The kind of servile revolt that was so often ruinous in Greece and Rome is hardly possible in a machine civilization, even if economic distress were to pass anything yet experienced since the eighteenth century. The most radical of the modern proletariat want more of the good things of civilization—not a destruction of technology. If the example of Russia be pressed as relevant, the reply is that Russia possessed not a machine, but an agricultural civilization of the crudest

sort; peasant soldiers supplied the storm troops of the November Revolution, and the Bolsheviks are straining every nerve to maintain their position by promising the peasants and urban dwellers that the benefits of a machine order will surely come. There will be upheavals in machine civilizations, no doubt, and occasional dictatorships like that in the United States between 1861 and 1865, but the triumph of a party dedicated to a deliberate return to pre-machine agriculture with its low standards of life, its diseases, and its illiteracy is beyond the imagination.

Finally, we must face the assertion that wars among the various nations of machine civilization may destroy the whole order. Probably terrible wars will arise and prove costly in blood and treasure, but it is a strain upon the speculative faculties to conceive of any conflict that could destroy the population and mechanical equipment of the Western world so extensively that human vitality and science could not restore economic prosperity and even improve upon the previous order. According to J. S. Mill, the whole mechanical outfit of a capitalistic country can be reproduced in about ten years. Hence the prospect of repeated and costly wars in the future need not lead us to the pessimistic view that suicide is to be the fate of machine civilization. We may admit the reality of the perils ahead without adopting the counsel of despair. If Europe and America were absolutely devastated, Japan with her present equipment in libraries, laboratories, and technology could begin the work of occupying the vacant areas, using the machine process in the operation.

For the reasons thus adduced it may be inferred: that modern civilization founded on science and the machine will not de-



## *Tradition and Social Change*

cline after the fashion of older agricultural civilizations; that analogies drawn from ages previous to technology are inapplicable; that according to signs on every hand technology promises to extend its area and intensify its characteristics; that it will afford the substance with which all who expect to lead and teach in the future must reckon.

### III

Such appears to be the promise of the long future, if not the grand destiny of what we call modern civilization—the flexible framework in which the human spirit must operate during the coming centuries. Yet this view by no means precludes the idea that the machine system, as tested by its present results, presents shocking evils and indeed terrible menaces to the noblest faculties of the human race. By the use of material standards for measuring achievement, it is in danger of developing a kind of ignorant complacency that would make Phidias, Sophocles, Horace, St. Augustine, Dante, Michelangelo, Shakespeare, Lord Bacon, Newton, Goethe, Ruskin and Emerson appear to be mere trifling parasites as compared with Lord Beaverbrook, Hugo Stinnes, John Pierpont Morgan, and Henry Ford. To deny the peril that lies in any such numerical morality would be a work of supererogation. More perilous still is the concentration on the production of goods that will sell quickly at the best price the traffic will bear and fall to pieces quickly—mass production of cheap goods—rather than concentration on the manufacture and exchange of commodities with the finest intrinsic values capable of indefinite endurance. What the creed of “give as little as you can for as much as you can get” will do to the common honesty of

mankind, if followed blindly for centuries, can readily be imagined. Finally, it must be admitted that the dedication of the engines of state, supported by a passionate and uninformed chauvinism, to the promotion and sale of machine-made goods is creating zones of international rivalry likely to flame up in wars more vast and destructive than any yet witnessed.

To consider for the moment merely the domestic aspects of the question, the machine civilization is particularly open to attack from three sides.

On esthetic grounds, it has been assailed for nearly a hundred years, England, the classical home of the industrial revolution, being naturally enough the mother of the severest critics—Ruskin, Carlyle, Kingsley, and Matthew Arnold. The chief article in their indictment, perhaps, is the contention that men who work with machinery are not creative, joyous, or free, but are slaves to the monotonous routine of the inexorable wheel. In a sense it is true that, in the pre-machine age, each craftsman had a certain leeway in shaping his materials with his tools and that many a common artisan produced articles of great beauty.

Yet the point can be easily overworked. Doubtless the vast majority of medieval artisans merely followed designs made by master workmen. This is certainly true of artisans in the Orient today. With respect to the mass of mankind, it is safe to assume that the level of monotony on which labor is conducted under the machine régime is by and large not lower but higher than in the handicraft, servile, or slave systems of the past. Let anyone who has doubts on this matter compare the life of laborers on the latifundia of Rome or in the cities of modern China with that of

## *Whither Mankind?*

the workers in by far the major portion of machine industries. Those who are prepared to sacrifice the standard of living for the millions to provide conditions presumably favorable to the creative arts must assume a responsibility of the first magnitude.

Indeed, it is not certain, so primitive as yet are the beginnings of machine civilization, that there can be no substitute for the handicrafts as esthetic stimulants, assuming that mechanical industry is not favorable to the creative life. The machine régime does not do away with the necessity for designing or reduce the opportunities for the practice of that craft: it transfers the operation from the shop to the laboratory; and it remains to be seen whether great esthetic powers will not flourish after the first storm of capitalism has passed. In any case, it must be admitted that the "cheap and nasty" character of machine-made goods, so marked everywhere, may really be due to the profit-making lust and the desire of the multitude to have imitations of the gewgaws loved by the patricians, not to the inherent nature of machine industry. Possibly what is lost in the merits of individual objects of beauty may be more than offset by city and community planning, realizing new types of esthetic ideals on a vast, democratic basis. Certainly the worst of the esthetic offenses created by the machine—the hideous factory town—can be avoided by intelligent coöperative action, as the garden-city movement faintly foreshadows. In a hundred years the coal-consuming engine may be as obsolete as the Dodo, and the Birminghams, Pittsburghs, and Essens of the modern world live only in the records of the historians. However this may be, the esthetes of the future will have to work within the limitations and

opportunities created by science and the machine, directed, it may be hoped, by a more intelligent economy and nobler concepts of human values.

Frequently affiliated with esthetic criticism of the machine and science is the religious attack. With endless reiteration, the charge is made that industrial civilization is materialistic. In reply, the scornful might say, "Well, what of it?" But the issue deserves consideration on its merits, in spite of its illusive nature. As generally used, the term "materialistic" has some of the qualities of moonshine; it is difficult to grasp. It is the fashion of certain Catholic writers to call Protestantism materialistic, on account of its emphasis on thrift and business enterprise—a fashion which some radicals have adopted: Max Weber in Germany and R. H. Tawney in England, for example. With something akin to the same discrimination, Oswald Spengler calls all England materialistic, governed by pecuniary standards—as contrasted with old Prussia where "duty," "honor," and "simple piety" reigned supreme. More recently, André Siegfried, following a hundred English critics, with Matthew Arnold in the lead, has found materialism to be one of the chief characteristics of the United States, as contrasted with the richer and older civilizations of Europe, particularly France. And Gandhi consigns every one of them—England, Prussia, France, and America—to the same bottomless pit of industrial materialism. When all this verbiage is sifted, it usually means that the charge arises from emotions that have little or no relation to religion or philosophy—from the quarrels of races, sects, and nations.

If religion is taken in a crude, anthropomorphic sense, filling the universe with gods, spirits, and miraculous feats, then

## *Tradition and Social Change*

beyond question the machine and science are the foes of religion. If it is materialistic to disclose the influence of technology and environment in general upon humanity, then perhaps the machine and science are materialistic. But it is one of the ironies of history that science has shown the shallowness of the old battle between materialist and spiritist and through the mouths of physicists has confessed that it does not know what matter and force are. Matter is motion; motion is matter; both elude us, we are told. Doubtless science does make short shrift of a thousand little mysteries once deemed as essential to Christianity as were the thousand minor gods to the religion of old Japan, but for these little mysteries it has substituted a higher and sublimer mystery.

To descend to the concrete, is the prevention of disease by sanitation more materialistic than curing it by touching saints' bones? Is feeding the multitude by mass production more materialistic than feeding it by a miracle? Is the elimination of famines by a better distribution of goods more materialistic than prevention by the placation of the rain gods? At any rate, it is not likely that science and machinery will be abandoned because the theologian (who seldom refuses to partake of their benefits) wrings his hands and cries out against materialism. After all, how can he consistently maintain that Omnipotent God ruled the world wisely and well until the dawn of the modern age and abandoned it to the Evil One because Henry VIII or Martin Luther quarreled with the Pope

and James Watt invented the steam engine?

Arising, perhaps, from the same emotional source as esthetic and religious criticism is the attack on the machine civilization as lacking in humanitarianism. Without commenting on man's inhumanity to man as an essential characteristic of the race, we may fairly ask on what grounds can anyone argue that the masses were more humanely treated in the agricultural civilization of antiquity or the Middle Ages than in the machine order of modern times. Tested by the mildness of its laws (brutal as many of them are), by its institutions of care and benevolence, by its death rate (that telltale measurement of human welfare), by its standards of life, and by every conceivable measure of human values, machine civilization, even in its present primitive stage, need fear no comparison with any other order on the score of general well-being.

Under the machine and science, the love of beauty, the sense of mystery, and the motive of compassion—sources of esthetics, religion, and humanism—are not destroyed. They remain essential parts of our nature. But the conditions under which they must operate, the channels they must take, the potentialities of their action are all changed. These ancient forces will become powerful in the modern age just in the proportion that men and women accept the inevitability of science and the machine, understand the nature of the civilization in which they must work, and turn their faces resolutely to the future.

# EINSTEIN ON THE ATOMIC BOMB

by ALBERT EINSTEIN as told to RAYMOND SWING

THE RELEASE of atomic energy has not created a new problem. It has merely made more urgent the necessity of solving an existing one. One could say that it has affected us quantitatively, not qualitatively. As long as there are sovereign nations possessing great power, war is inevitable. That statement is not an attempt to say when war will come, but only that it is sure to come. That fact was true before the atomic bomb was made. What has been changed is the destructiveness of war.

I do not believe that civilization will be wiped out in a war fought with the atomic bomb. Perhaps two thirds of the people of the earth might be killed, but enough men capable of thinking, and enough books, would be left to start again, and civilization could be restored.

I do not believe that the secret of the bomb should be given to the United Nations organization. I do not believe that it should be given to the Soviet Union. Either course would be like the action of a man with capital, who, wishing another man to work with him on some enterprise, should start out by simply giving his prospective partner half of his money. The second man might choose to start a rival enterprise, when what was wanted was his coöperation.

The secret of the bomb should be committed to a World Government, and the United States should immediately announce its readiness to give it to a World Government. This government should be founded by the United States, the Soviet

Union, and Great Britain—the only three powers with great military strength. All three of them should commit to this World Government all of their military strength. The fact that there are only three nations with great military power should make it easier rather than harder to establish such a government.

Since the United States and Great Britain have the secret of the atomic bomb and the Soviet Union does not, they should invite the Soviet Union to prepare and present the first draft of a Constitution for the proposed World Government. That action should help to dispel the distrust which the Russians already feel because the bomb is being kept a secret, chiefly to prevent their having it. Obviously the first draft would not be the final one, but the Russians should be made to feel that the World Government would assure them their security.

It would be wise if this Constitution were to be negotiated by a single American, a single Britisher, and a single Russian. They would have to have advisers, but these advisers should only advise when asked. I believe three men can succeed in writing a workable Constitution acceptable to all three nations. Six or seven men, or more, probably would fail.

After the three great powers have drafted a Constitution and adopted it, the smaller nations should be invited to join the World Government. They should be free to stay out; and though they would be perfectly secure in staying out, I am sure they would wish to join. Naturally

Albert Einstein and Raymond Swing, "Einstein on the Atomic Bomb," *The Atlantic Monthly* (November, 1945). By permission of the authors and *The Atlantic Monthly*.

## *Tradition and Social Change*

they should be entitled to propose changes in the Constitution as drafted by the Big Three. But the Big Three should go ahead and organize the World Government whether the smaller nations join or not.

The World Government would have power over all military matters and need have only one further power: the power to intervene in countries where a minority is oppressing a majority and creating the kind of instability that leads to war. Conditions such as exist in Argentina and Spain should be dealt with. There must be an end to the concept of non-intervention, for to end it is part of keeping the peace.

The establishment of the World Government must not have to wait until the same conditions of freedom are to be found in all three of the great powers. While it is true that in the Soviet Union the minority rules, I do not consider that internal conditions there are of themselves a threat to world peace. One must bear in mind that the people in Russia did not have a long political education, and changes to improve Russian conditions had to be carried through by a minority for the reason that there was no majority capable of doing it. If I had been born a Russian, I believe I could have adjusted myself to this condition.

It is not necessary, in establishing a world organization with a monopoly of military authority, to change the structure of the three great powers. It would be for the three individuals who draft the Constitution to devise ways for the different structures to be fitted together for collaboration.

2

Do I fear the tyranny of a World Government? Of course I do. But I fear still

more the coming of another war or wars. Any government is certain to be evil to some extent. But a World Government is preferable to the far greater evil of wars, particularly with their intensified destructiveness. If a World Government is not established by agreement, I believe it will come in another way and in a much more dangerous form. For war or wars will end in one power's being supreme and dominating the rest of the world by its overwhelming military strength.

Now that we have the atomic secret, we must not lose it, and that is what we should risk doing if we should give it to the United Nations organization or to the Soviet Union. But we must make it clear, as quickly as possible, that we are not keeping the bomb a secret for the sake of our power, but in the hope of establishing peace in a World Government, and that we will do our utmost to bring this World Government into being.

I appreciate that there are persons who favor a gradual approach to World Government even though they approve of it as the ultimate objective. The trouble about taking little steps, one at a time, in the hope of reaching that ultimate goal is that while they are being taken, we continue to keep the bomb secret without making our reason convincing to those who do not have the secret. That of itself creates fear and suspicion, with the consequence that the relations of rival sovereignties deteriorate dangerously. So, while persons who take only a step at a time may think they are approaching world peace, they actually are contributing, by their slow pace, to the coming of war. We have no time to spend in this way. If war is to be averted, it must be done quickly.

We shall not have the secret very long.

## *Einstein on the Atomic Bomb*

I know it is argued that no other country has money enough to spend on the development of the atomic bomb, and this fact assures us the secret for a long time. It is a mistake often made in this country to measure things by the amount of money they cost. But other countries which have the materials and the men can apply them to the work of developing atomic power if they care to do so. For men and materials and the decision to use them, and not money, are all that is needed.

I do not consider myself the father of the release of atomic energy. My part in it was quite indirect. I did not, in fact, foresee that it would be released in my time. I believed only that release was theoretically possible. It became practical through the accidental discovery of chain reactions, and this was not something I could have predicted. It was discovered by Hahn in Berlin, and he himself misinterpreted what he discovered. It was Lise Meitner who provided the correct interpretation and escaped from Germany to place the information in the hands of Niels Bohr.

I do not believe that a great era of atomic science is to be assured by organizing sciences in the way large corporations are organized. One can organize to apply a discovery already made, but not to make one. Only a free individual can make a discovery. There can be a kind of organizing by which scientists are assured their freedom and proper conditions of work. Professors of science in American universities, for instance, should be relieved of some of their teaching so as to have time for more research. Can you imagine an organization of scientists making the discoveries of Charles Darwin?

Nor do I believe that the vast private corporations of the United States are suit-

able to the needs of these times. If a visitor should come to this country from another planet, would he not find it strange that in this country so much power is given to private corporations without their having commensurate responsibility? I say this to stress that the American government must keep the control of atomic energy, not because socialism is necessarily desirable, but because atomic energy was developed by the government and it would be unthinkable to turn over this property of the people to any individual or group of individuals. As to socialism, unless it is international to the extent of producing a World Government which controls all military power, it might more easily lead to wars than does capitalism, because it represents a still greater concentration of power.

To give any estimate of when atomic energy can be applied to constructive purposes is impossible. What now is known is only how to use a fairly large quantity of uranium. The use of quantities sufficiently small to operate, say, a car or an airplane is as yet impossible. No doubt it will be achieved, but nobody can say when.

Nor can one predict when materials more common than uranium can be used to supply atomic energy. Presumably all materials used for this purpose will be among the heavier elements of high atomic weight. Those elements are relatively scarce, because of their lesser stability. Most of these materials may already have disappeared by radioactive disintegration. So, though the release of atomic energy can be, and no doubt will be, a great boon to mankind, that may not be for some time.

I myself do not have the gift of explanation by which to persuade large numbers

## Tradition and Social Change

of people of the urgencies of the problems the human race now faces. Hence I should like to commend someone who has this gift of explanation—Emery Reves, whose book, *The Anatomy of Peace*, is intelligent, brief, clear, and, if I may use the abused term, dynamic on the topic of war and the need for World Government.

Since I do not foresee that atomic energy is to be a great boon for a long time, I have to say that for the present it is a menace. Perhaps it is well that it should be. It may intimidate the human race into bringing order into its international affairs, which, without the pressure of fear, it would not do.

## THE ATOMIC BOMB AND WORLD GOVERNMENT

by SUMNER WELLES

IN THE NOVEMBER ISSUE of the *Atlantic Monthly*, Professor Albert Einstein has given us his drastic and urgent recommendations as to the course we should follow in dealing with the problem of the atomic bomb.

Professor Einstein has played a notable part in the development of atomic energy. He figured prominently in the series of events which led to the manufacture of the atomic bomb. He is a citizen of the United States, and his fellow Americans are justly proud of his achievements. I regret the obligation under which I find myself of taking issue with many of the views and recommendations set forth in his article. Yet I must do so because I believe that many people who recognize the authority with which he speaks in the field of science will be readily persuaded that he is for that reason an equally competent guide in the field of international politics.

The unleashing of atomic power, which was first made known to the peoples of the earth when the atomic bomb fell on Hiroshima, and the assumption that the manufacturing secrets of this discovery are

in the exclusive possession of three governments, have blanketed the world with a poisonous fog of suspicion and of fear.

The atomic bomb has touched all peoples with hysteria.

Within the United States it has had the effect of intensifying the convictions of those groups formerly known as "isolationist," who can conceive of no proper policy for their government to follow other than a narrowly selfish policy of preponderant armaments and of imperialistic expansion.

It has moved the idealists to rush to the conclusion that all the great achievements represented by the agreement of fifty-one nations to establish the United Nations Organization must immediately be scrapped. They are convinced that a fresh start must be made without a moment's delay. To the idealists a fresh start is always preferable to the hard grind.

Professor H. D. Smyth, head of the Physics Department in Princeton University, has truly said that the development of atomic energy "raises many questions that must be answered in the near future. . . . These questions are not technical

Sumner Welles, "The Atomic Bomb and World Government," *The Atlantic Monthly* (December, 1945). By permission of Mr. Sumner Welles and *The Atlantic Monthly*.

## *The Atomic Bomb and World Government*

questions; they are political and social questions and the answers given to them may affect all mankind for generations."

What Professor Einstein proposes as his answer to these questions is to be found succinctly set forth in the following portion of his article:—

The secret of the bomb should be committed to a world government, and the United States should immediately announce its readiness to give it to a world government. This government should be founded by the United States, the Soviet Union, and Great Britain—the only three powers with great military strength. All three of them should commit to this world government all of their military strength. The fact that there are only three nations with great military power should make it easier rather than harder to establish such a government.

Since the United States and Great Britain have the secret of the atomic bomb and the Soviet Union does not, they should invite the Soviet Union to prepare and present the first draft of a constitution for the proposed world government. . . .

After the three great powers have drafted a constitution and adopted it, the smaller nations should be invited to join the world government. They should be free to stay out; and though they would be perfectly secure in staying out, I am sure they would wish to join. . . . But the Big Three should go ahead and organize the world government whether the smaller nations join or not.

Professor Einstein later asserts: "It is not necessary, in establishing a world organization with a monopoly of military authority, to change the structure of the three great powers. It would be for the three individuals who draft the constitution to devise ways for the different structures to be fitted together for collaboration."

In Professor Einstein's view the solution

is as simple as that. He is evidently confident that adoption of his proposal is not only imperative but feasible as well.

The question before us is whether his proposal is practicable and desirable.

I am convinced that the achievement of any such objective at this time is wholly impracticable. I must add that I also have grave questions as to the desirability of his proposal in the form in which he presents it.

2

Professor Einstein's concept is premised upon his assumption that the Soviet Government would agree to a world government with power "over all military matters" provided the Soviet Government may prepare the first draft of a constitution for such a world government.

It is interesting to speculate as to the nature of the draft constitution which the Soviet Government would now prepare.

I can conceive of the Soviet Union's agreeing to enter a world government if a constitution is drafted, and is agreed upon by the United States and Great Britain, which provides for a World Union of Soviet Socialist Republics with the capital of that world government located in Moscow. I cannot imagine that the Soviet Union would participate in a world government upon any other basis.

No world government of the character envisaged by Professor Einstein could function unless it possessed the power to exercise complete control over the armaments of each constituent state, and unless every nation was willing to open up every inch of its territory and every one of its laboratories and factories to a continuing international inspection. Nor could it function unless the government of each participating country was equally



## *Tradition and Social Change*

willing to submit to the scrutiny of the authorities of the world government every one of its governmental processes, including its conduct of foreign and internal affairs and of finance.

It surely requires no demonstration that any such requisite as that would wholly destroy the present Soviet system. We have every right to believe, from our knowledge of Russian policy and from our understanding of the fundamental motives inherent in the Soviet form of Communism, that neither the present Soviet Government nor the rank and file of the members of the Communist Party in Russia would ever consent to the obliteration, from one day to another, of the system which, over a period of twenty-eight years, they have at so great a sacrifice finally, with a great measure of success, established. We have every reason to be confident that unless the Soviet Union could so dominate the proposed world government as to preclude the possibility of any weakening of its own control of Russian foreign and domestic policy, it would not participate in that government.

And what about the United States and Great Britain?

We may, for the sake of argument, grant the highly unlikely possibility that a majority of the people of the United States would be willing to consider participation in a United States of the World built upon a foundation similar to that provided in their own Federal Constitution. It is within the realm of possibility that the British people would be willing to throw overboard their own form of government, although it has served them well and proved responsive to their own peculiar requirements, and join in such a United States of the World. But it is to my mind fantastic to assume that either the American or the British people would be willing to

join in a World Union of Soviet Socialist Republics when such a union would inevitably result in the dissolution of the individual form of government which they have gradually evolved to meet their national needs, and also abolish all those cherished principles of individual liberty which are sacred to the Anglo-Saxon peoples—and which, in the case of the United States, are comprised in the Bill of Rights.

I believe that the major fallacy in Professor Einstein's proposal lies in his assertion that "it is not necessary, in establishing a world organization with a monopoly of military authority, to change the structure of the three great powers." I regard it as wholly impossible that the three individuals who, he suggests, should draft the constitution for this world government could, for the purposes he envisages, ever succeed in devising "ways for the different structures to be fitted together for collaboration."

### 3

There is another aspect of Professor Einstein's proposal which fills me with amazement. He declares that, in addition to the other powers with which he would vest his world government, that government should have "the power to intervene in countries where a minority is oppressing a majority and creating the kind of instability that leads to war." He admits that it is true that in the Soviet Union the minority rules, but he insists that, if he had been born a Russian, he could have "adjusted" himself to this condition.

If I understand his thesis correctly, and I think I do, minority rule should be regarded as iniquitous in every nation of the world except the Soviet Union. His proposed world government would, therefore, be granted the right to intervene in every country of the earth for the purpose

## *The Atomic Bomb and World Government*

of establishing there such form of government, or such internal regime, as the dominating powers within the world government considered desirable, with the exception of the Soviet Union.

This view, of course, approximates the classic thesis of the Third International that minorities are entitled to exercise control when they are of the Communist faith. Examples are not wanting that the logical outgrowth of this philosophy is the assertion of the right of Communist minorities by liquidations and terror to dominate opposing majorities until those majorities have been forced into the Communist line.

The issue raises one of the gravest problems with which freedom-loving peoples are today faced. Will peoples such as the English-speaking peoples, determined upon the preservation at any cost of their individual liberty, accept any form of world order which grants to some alien and superior power the authority to intervene in their internal life in such a manner as to determine for them how they shall be governed, to what extent their individual liberty may be reduced, and whether the voice of dissenting minorities or of dissenting majorities may make itself heard?

I wholly agree that no peaceful world can be envisaged unless the nations which take part in a new international organization voluntarily fix certain standards of governmental conduct which they commit themselves severally to uphold. These standards must comprehend the assurance that religious and political freedom, and the chance to obtain economic security, will be guaranteed without discrimination to all their respective nationals. The international organization must see to it that the guaranties so fixed are carried out.

But any intervention, such as that which

Professor Einstein proposes, upon the part of his world government, in the internal affairs of independent peoples, for the sole purpose of imposing upon them a standardized form of government or a particular brand of political philosophy, would subject the nations of the world to a dictatorship exercised by the Big Three, with all other people as abject serfs. No free world can be founded upon such a concept. It was precisely in order to prevent the establishment of such a world that the vast majority of the United Nations fought through to final victory over the Axis powers.

The Republic of Uruguay, often in the past one of the most enlightened and progressive of nations in its consideration of the problems of international organization, has recently made public a proposal with respect to the much debated problem of intervention. The proposal of the Government of Uruguay, because of special circumstances, is, in its application, limited to problems which may arise in the Western Hemisphere. The basic principles embodied in this proposal, however, are universally applicable.

The Uruguayan Government, which for many years has been in the forefront of those nations decrying the evils resulting from the unilateral interference of any state in the purely internal affairs of some other country, recognizes that the peace of the Western Hemisphere may be jeopardized if developments occur within any American republic as a result of which the individual liberties of the nationals of that republic are destroyed. It says: "Non-intervention must be used on the basis that it is not a shield behind which crimes may be perpetrated, law may be violated, agents and forces of the Axis may be sheltered, and binding obligations may be circumvented."

## *Tradition and Social Change*

It has therefore recommended that the American republics consider the possibility of joint action on the part of all of them when, by common agreement, any American government has abrogated the rights of its citizens to determine their own destinies and to enjoy the individual freedoms to which they are entitled, and has thereby violated its treaty obligations and endangered the highest interests of all of the peoples of the New World.

There are twenty-one independent republics in the American family of nations. International democracy in the purest sense of the term exists in the inter-American system. The smallest state has precisely the same right as that accorded the most powerful. It is therefore altogether improbable that, should the conditions foreseen by the Government of Uruguay exist in any one American republic, joint action on the part of all the remaining twenty nations could ever be undertaken in order to further the selfish interests of any one major power or to pave the way for aggression or unilateral domination.

If, therefore, in the United Nations Organization the power to correct any infringement of the liberty of individuals were to rest exclusively in the hands of the Assembly, where the smaller nations possess a great majority, and not in the Security Council, which is controlled by the major powers, the danger that such intervention might be exercised in the exclusive interest of the three major powers, or of any one of them, could be avoided.

### 4

Those who have had some part in preparing for the agreement upon the United Nations Charter recognize the modern miracle which the establishment of the United Nations Organization implies.

There were in play the idiosyncrasies, the prejudices, the hidden objectives, the selfish ambitions, and, not infrequently, the blind suspicions of some fifty peoples of the earth. All these conflicting points of view were finally reconciled. The experience derived from the League of Nations was taken into account. The machinery of international organization was at last constructed.

That machinery can work, whatever the new developments in the field of science may be, if the peoples of the world are determined that it shall not fail.

No government, and few individuals, will regard the Charter of the United Nations as satisfactory. The vast majority, however, possess the firm hope that if peace can be maintained during the first years of transition after the war, and in particular any major conflict can be prevented, the United Nations Charter can gradually be improved so that the United Nations Organization will become more nearly a federal government of the world and more truly an agency of international democracy.

I myself strongly believe that the objective towards which the nations must move is the ultimate establishment, through the United Nations, of a federal world government founded upon law and representative of the true principles of international democracy. But the way in which that objective can be most surely and most rapidly attained is to be found, not in the proposals of Professor Einstein, but rather in the counsel of Senator Hatch, when he said recently on the floor of the Senate, "We must use the machinery we now have, improving it as best we can, making every needed amendment and change, as we progress toward the ultimate goal of complete world-wide rule by law instead of rule by force."

## *The Atomic Bomb and World Government*

Professor Einstein says: "I appreciate that there are persons who favor a gradual approach to world government even though they approve of it as the ultimate objective. The trouble about taking little steps, one at a time, in the hope of reaching that ultimate goal is that while they are being taken, we continue to keep the bomb secret without making our reason convincing to those who do not have the secret. That of itself creates fear and suspicion with the consequence that the relations of rival sovereignties deteriorate dangerously. So, while persons who take only a step at a time may think they are approaching world peace, they actually are contributing, by their slow pace, to the coming of war."

Whatever may be the weaknesses and the defects in the atomic bomb proposal recently made by the President of the United States and the Prime Ministers of the United Kingdom and of Canada, the proposal at least provides that the United Nations Organization as at present constituted shall assume jurisdiction over the problem. The Assembly, representing all the governments of the United Nations, meets in January. It can and it should exercise that jurisdiction. If the will is there—and I think it is—an effective solution can be found.

What Professor Einstein seems to me to overlook, in his insistence that moving slowly means war, is that from the standpoint of existing facts it is an utter impossibility to do anything else than move slowly until the mutual fears and suspicions existing between so many nations of the world have been ended. How can these fears and suspicions be ended until and unless all nations, and particularly the Big Three, work together within the United Nations Organization and thus little by little discover by actual proof that

there exist no valid reasons and no basic causes for their mutual fears and suspicions?"

It may well be that the release of atomic energy has shortened the time within which men will have the chance to reconstruct world order. But the one great certainty which they possess is that they can only reach that goal by marching together and by firmly consolidating each gain as they march forward.

From every standpoint, international relations since V-J Day have gravely deteriorated. The primary reason for the deterioration is the fact that no agency has existed, no organization has been functioning, through which the peoples and governments of the world could work together. Had the United Nations Organization actually been functioning before V-E Day, the present deterioration could unquestionably have been avoided. The one real hope which humanity now possesses rests in the United Nations Organization and in the willingness and capacity of governments to put it rapidly to work. As the war years showed, when governments have to work together or face annihilation, they can agree, even though they be sovereign governments and retain such attributes of sovereignty as need not be relinquished in order to make their alliance effective.

There is no question in my mind that if the United Nations Organization is now utilized to the fullest extent by all the participating countries, it can lay the foundations for world reconstruction, for human progress, and for peace among nations. If we abandon it without a trial, we deliberately reject the one instrument which today exists through which these objectives can be secured.

In the light of present conditions, it seems to me highly doubtful that, had the

## Tradition and Social Change

United Nations Charter not been adopted at San Francisco last June, and had the effort now to be made to secure the adoption of a Charter, any instrument nearly so effective as the present Charter could today secure the approval of the same number of governments. Yet Professor Einstein recommends that that great and significant achievement be discarded, and that the governments of the world attempt

instead to obtain the consent of fifty-one nations to a form of world government upon which we may be quite certain the peoples of the United States, of Great Britain, and of the Soviet Union cannot agree.

If the peoples of the earth today abandon the United Nations Organization, they will get chaos without hope. For out of chaos fresh confidence does not arise.

*In the future days, which we seek to make secure, we look forward to a world founded upon four essential human freedoms.*

1 *The first is freedom of speech and expression—everywhere in the world.*

*The second is freedom of every person to worship God in his own way—everywhere in the world.*

*The third is freedom from want—which, translated into world terms, means economic understandings which will secure to every nation a healthy peace time life for its inhabitants—everywhere in the world.*

*The fourth is freedom from fear—which, translated into world terms, means a world-wide reduction of armaments to such a point and in such a thorough fashion that no nation will be in a position to commit an act of physical aggression against any neighbor—anywhere in the world.*

*That is no vision of a distant millennium. It is a definite basis for a kind of world attainable in our own time and generation.*

—FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT, January 6, 1941

## CHANGE AND THE AMERICAN TRADITION

by GEORGE SOULE

THE MINDS of Americans are deeply troubled nowadays by a conflict of ideas—the conflict between necessity for change and loyalty to American tradition.

We cannot look in any direction without observing perils threatening our society. The earlier promise of American life has been betrayed by the existence of mil-

lions of unemployed industrial workers, by the expropriation of farmers and other classes of property owners, by the disappearance of capital, and by the dependence of a large part of our population on governmental assistance. There is no assurance that similar disasters may not occur in the future. We have engaged in

From George Soule, *The Future of Liberty*. By permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers.

## *Change and the American Tradition*

one world war, and are daily threatened by the suicide of another. There have been few periods in history when men and women were menaced by more confusion and peril. The ignominy of this situation is impressed upon us when we remember that it is not the outcome of an uncontrollable cataclysm of nature—except as man himself is regarded as part of nature. Though we have suffered earthquakes, droughts or floods, these have not brought us where we are. It is the result, almost exclusively, of human ways of acting and thinking. Somehow or other, the conceptions on which our action is supposed to be based, the forms of organization which we have built up, have either failed to control our behavior, or, if they have controlled it, have done so to little purpose.

The hope that we may blunder through to a temporary period of better fortune is enough to satisfy the more complacent; signs of "recovery" are continually cited to bring us courage. But it is axiomatic that if the modes of behavior that brought us to our recent misfortunes are continued unchanged, any better outcome in the future will give way in the end to a similar and possibly a worse calamity.

To change our fortune we must change our minds. General recognition of this fact has brought forth many suggestions for alteration in our institutions. Insistent pressure from the logic of events, working upon the deepest needs of the personality, forces us to consider new arrangements of society.

But here arises the conflict. Any suggestion of basic change offends our loyalty to the concepts on which we suppose our culture to have been founded. Assertion of the rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, belief in democracy and in its American constitutional expression,

faith in the perfectibility of the individual, trust in reason and science as the basis of assurance and in persuasion as a method of bringing about action in a free society, run deep in us. We are the inheritors of a powerful liberal tradition; it was in the period when these ideas were flowering most luxuriantly that this nation achieved its independence and adopted its form of government. We look abroad at the peoples that have made great changes in response to contemporary crises, and see that liberty and democracy in our sense of the words do not there exist. Both Fascism and Communism, though they are at opposite poles of doctrine in their major tenets, express contempt for liberalism. Many Americans, aroused by these challenges to old loyalties, forget the plight we ourselves are in, and talk as if the exclusive purpose of this nation were the negative one of avoiding what they conceive to be these new foreign dangers. Indeed, they are so moved by the call to protect our traditions that they attempt to avoid every change by exorcising it with one of the current vocabulary of bad names. William Randolph Hearst, for example, warns against "pestilent innovators." Even in more sober circles, relatively moderate innovations are suspect merely because they are innovations. New statutes have to pass the scrutiny of judges who examine them, not primarily to determine whether they will serve the social purposes that seemed good to the supposedly democratic agencies that enacted them, but rather to adjudicate their conformity to the constitutional framework of that democracy. The conflict between our need for change and our traditions gives us a national bad conscience and confuses our counsels.

This dilemma is not merely one of words, it is not one that begins and ends in ideas unconnected with the practical

## *Tradition and Social Change*

world. It appears again and again in problems of action. Let us take a common example. The citizen begins with the simple faith that the all-important task is to protect American liberty against those who desire to destroy it. An agitator comes into his community, helps to organize the workers and leads a strike for higher wages and better conditions. The local citizen is told that this agitator believes in Communism. The strike is conceived, both by him and by its leader, as in some sense a challenge to existing institutions. A court enjoins picketing. Police and troops are called out to suppress it. Public opinion is mobilized against the strikers by the newspapers. A band of vigilantes kidnaps the leaders and forces them out of the community by violence or threats of violence. Subsequently our good citizen supports so-called "criminal syndicalism" bills to punish mere membership in any organization that is supposed to teach the necessity of change in our form of government by violent means; possession of revolutionary literature is made a crime. What in fact has he done?

In the name of American liberty he has violated every one of its basic tenets. He has suppressed, in the interest of employers, an initial gesture toward democracy in industry. Not only is democracy denied, but equality also; even equal rights before the law are violated by the use of courts, police and military against the less fortunate party in an economic dispute. Further, he has himself broken the law and transgressed the principles of civil government by exercising private violence. He has abandoned reason and discarded persuasion by forceful suppression of the labor controversy, without any fair adjudication of the issues involved. He has also, by the laws he espouses, denied free speech and freedom of the press. He has made it

possible for the Communist agitator to prove to the workers through their own experience that liberalism is merely a mask for the dictatorship of capital, that the liberal, in a crisis, turns into a Fascist, and that the only real choice is between Fascism and Communism. The effort to protect a static conception of liberty has succeeded merely in making inevitable the destruction of liberty.

It is no answer to say that if we did not fight against revolutionaries, they would in the end destroy liberty anyway. If that is true, liberty is lost by either course. It is exposed as something that cannot be maintained in the modern world. If liberty cannot be protected without fighting enemies of liberty, and if fighting these enemies means abandoning liberty, then the conception of liberty is meaningless in fact, and cannot be a trustworthy guide to action.

Conflicts of liberties are not always so sharp and dramatic as this, and they occur continually throughout the warp and woof of our society. Shall the liberty of automobile drivers be restricted by traffic regulations, and if so, how far shall that restriction go? Shall the liberty of individual farmers to settle where they like, grow what they like, and manage their farms as they see fit, be restricted in the interest of higher prices for crops or in the effort to prevent loss of the nation's soil through erosion? Shall freedom of the press be restricted in the interest of discouraging immoral influence on the young? Shall the liberty of speculators on stock markets be restricted in the interest of innocent investors? Neither an abstract belief in liberty nor an abstract belief in regulation offers much help in the solution of such difficulties.

The examples to which we have referred are not irrelevant and isolated ones;

## *Change and the American Tradition*

they are typical; they reveal a basic confusion in the symbols that determine our social behavior. The same issues arise whenever we try to deal with a practical situation which demands organization, regulation, or decision—and what situation does not? Some purpose must be sought, some compulsion must be exercised, someone must make a decision. But when purposes conflict—as they frequently do—the making of a decision obstructs the purpose against which the compulsion is exercised. Somebody's liberty to do something must be denied if any action is to be taken. This truth applies to all rules and all social institutions, from a baseball league to a national political government.

It is difficult to overestimate the importance of the problem that this conflict presents in a period of social crisis. Shall we abandon utterly our traditional conceptions in the interest of a new social order? Or shall we regard them as final, unquestionable dogmas, in the interest of which all thoughts of real change must be suppressed? Or do they contain a truth to which our actual development has been false, a truth that, reinterpreted, may guide our action?

At this point it is prudent to make a brief excursion to reveal the bias of the writer. Social questions are too often discussed without such frank revelation. For instance, the adherent of the economic principles of Adam Smith—a master propagandist if ever there was one—is likely to assume that while his attitude is calm, objective and scientific, any opposing point of view distorts the argument in behalf of a cause. No vulgarity is more common than to attack all “isms,” as if the speaker himself were not defending, let us say, Americanism or liberalism, as if there were any ground for attacking anything whatever except on the basis of human de-

sire and a system of thought that grows up about it. The most deceptive bias is that which is not acknowledged. Therefore it is an essential part of candor, indeed of the scientific method itself in the so-called social sciences, to acknowledge one's prejudice somewhere near the beginning.

My bias is democratic and liberal. The words of the Declaration of Independence have always aroused my enthusiastic loyalty. I take pride in the origin of this nation as the expression of a new faith in the destiny of mankind. I believe in the right of the individual to seek his own fulfillment, in equality of status, in the attempt of man to control his own destiny instead of having it controlled for him by some representative of hereditary right or superhuman revelation. I believe, not in blind submission, but in mutual respect among upstanding individuals. I believe in the right to question all creeds and institutions in the light of reason, in a continually recurring need to reject and build anew. I believe in the legitimacy of revolution: not merely the revolution that my forefathers helped to make in the eighteenth century, but any new revolution that may be justified by the interest and reason of the common man.

The Declaration of Independence begins with mention of “the course of human events” and the necessity for dissolution of traditional bonds. There is here an affirmation that human events move and that the movement sometimes demands fundamental change. It declares further:

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are insti-



## *Tradition and Social Change*

tuted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.

General as these words are, and difficult as they are to interpret in specific cases, they mean something that is precious even in the modern world. It is true that we do deprive men of life or liberty even in the literal sense every time we deal with a criminal. The pursuit of happiness is limited by a tangle of obligations and restrictions. We know that men are not equal in native gifts or in the rewards to which their activity entitles them. Nevertheless, there is something in the direction toward which these affirmations point that adds to the dignity and meaning of life. We could not enthusiastically assent to the contraries: that men have no rights, that they must be compelled to suffer death, slavery and pain, that inequality is natural and desirable.

The more sober statement of our civil liberties in the Bill of Rights embodied in amendments to the Federal Constitution is likewise worth repeating, as an expression of the safeguards against tyranny that are still of primary value. We must admit the tortured interpretation that courts have often given to the "due process" clauses, we must acknowledge that in practical application these generalities are often distorted beyond recognition by expansion in some cases and restriction in others. People are subjected to unfair trials, heavy bail, cruel punishments; freedom of speech and assembly is often forbidden. We can-

not forget Mooney and Billings, or Sacco and Vanzetti. Every year sees its long list of lynchings, of violent suppressions. Nevertheless the principles still mean something.

### ARTICLE I

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

### ARTICLE IV

The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no Warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by Oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.

### ARTICLE V

No person shall be held to answer for a capital or otherwise infamous crime, unless on a presentment or indictment of a Grand Jury, except in cases arising in the land or naval forces, or in the Militia, when in actual service in time of war or public danger; nor shall any person be subject for the same offense to be twice put in jeopardy of life or limb; nor shall be compelled in any criminal case to be a witness against himself, nor be deprived of life, liberty or property, without due process of law; nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation.

### ARTICLE VI

In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury of the State and district wherein the crime shall have been committed, which district shall have been previously ascertained by law, and to be informed of the nature and cause of the accu-

## *Change and the American Tradition*

sation; to be confronted with the witnesses against him; to have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor, and to have the Assistance of Counsel for his defense.

### ARTICLE VIII

Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted.

### ARTICLE XIV

All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside. No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States, nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property without due process of law, nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.

Now it may be that these principles themselves are irrational or contradictory. As Carl Becker has told us in his "Heavenly City of the Eighteenth Century Philosophers," the founders of liberalism may have been performing a magician's trick in transferring divine sanction from the rule of kings and the lords of the church to the "unalienable" rights with which, in Thomas Jefferson's words, men have been "endowed by their creator." We have learned from candid historians like Charles A. Beard that the motives of the early Americans were not all pure and not all the same; economic interests played a large part both in their revolt against England and in the subsequent formation of the Constitution, a document that attempted the difficult and probably impossible compromise of protecting propertied interests while giving expression to Jeffersonian democracy. The history of the republic is in itself a most

inadequate embodiment of the aspirations with which it began, and particularly so in recent years. In spite of all this, there is an ineradicable confidence that somehow or other such words are valid; that they provide, if properly defined and applied, an indispensable frame of reference and a standard of values. If the sort of faith that is embodied in these words is not a basis of social judgment, I do not know where to find another that I can accept.

This confession is important not just as the acknowledgment of a personal vagary that may have to be discounted in reading this book. It is also important because of acceptance among the generality of those who will have to act or lead action in the United States. Every personality, in order to find psychic security, has to organize itself about symbols of faith. When we drift along with a smooth current, these symbols may be submerged; the need of self-organization may be satisfied by the merest empty formula, seldom invoked and never examined. But when rough waters threaten to tear us apart; when external misfortunes create emotional disturbances, we seek ardently a set of beliefs about which we can integrate ourselves; we reject as vehemently those symbols that do not seem to fit this integration. As long as a man remains seriously divided within himself, he does not, he cannot act. Those who carry the day in a crisis are those whose minds have become crystallized, temporarily at least. This explains the importance, in revolutionary periods, of the leader or the leading idea. Regardless of the objective substance covered by the labels that we accept, we defend them as final and unquestionable truth. And the symbols to which we turn are likely to be, in some form or other, those that have aroused our loyalty in an impressionable

## *Tradition and Social Change*

period. For better or for worse, the symbols that are most potent in this country are those that are found in our tradition. Whatever is done about them, they cannot be ignored by anyone who is long going to influence us as a people.

By the same token, however, it is equally important to attach these symbols to a kind of action that will satisfy continuing needs. If words like liberty and democracy are appropriated by the standard-bearers of opposition to all change, they may succeed for a period in freezing existing institutions. But if existing institutions will not feed us and clothe us, if they make us a nation of economic slaves and allow no room for the growth of the personality, we shall have suffered a false and superficial integration, which cannot endure. It is important, in an objective sense, what is done in the name of our faith, and what its effectiveness is. In 1917 we fought a war to make the world safe

for democracy, a war to end war. Let us be careful that a contemporary crusade for liberty does not lead us to an equally disastrous betrayal.

We proceed, then, on the following assumptions. Drastic change may be necessary for mere survival, to say nothing of more elaborate objectives. The conflict between the need for change and our traditional symbols of faith must somehow be allayed. An abolition of this conflict that involves a suppression of the faith is unlikely. Even if it occurred, the kind of change that resulted would be inferior because of its loss of whatever was valid in the faith. Abolition of the conflict by the victory of the faith over change would be a denial of needs as imperative as the faith itself. What we have to do is to re-examine and interpret the faith in such a way that it will allow room for the change, to do so, indeed, in a manner that will help to compel the change.

## GET THERE IF YOU CAN

by W. H. AUDEN

Get there if you can and see the land you once were proud to own  
Though the roads have almost vanished and the expresses never run:

Smokeless chimneys, damaged bridges, rotting wharves and choked canals,  
Tramlines buckled, smashed trucks lying on their side across the rails;

Power-stations locked, deserted, since they drew the boiler fires;  
Pylons fallen or subsiding, trailing dead high-tension wires;

Head-gears gaunt on grass-grown pit-banks, seams abandoned years ago;  
Drop a stone and listen for its splash in flooded dark below.

Squeeze into the works through broken windows or through damp-sprung doors;  
See the rotted shafting, see holes gaping in the upper floors;

From *The Collected Poetry of W. H. Auden*. Copyright, 1945, by W. H. Auden. Reprinted by permission of Random House, Inc.

### *Let There If You Can*

Where the Sunday lads come talking motor bicycle and girl,  
Smoking cigarettes in chains until their heads are in a whirl.

Far from there we spent the money, thinking we could well afford,  
While they quietly undersold us with their cheaper trade abroad;

At the theatre, playing tennis, driving motor cars we had,  
In our continental villas, mixing cocktails for a cad.

These were boon companions who devised the legends for our toms,  
Those who have betrayed us nicely while we took them to our rooms.

Newman, Ciddy, Plato, Fronny, Pascal, Bowdler, Baudelaire,  
Doctor Frommer, Mrs. Allom, Freud, the Baron, and Flaubert.

Lured with their compelling logic, charmed with beauty of their verse,  
With their loaded sideboards whispered 'Better join us, life is worse.'

Taught us at the annual camps arranged by the big business men  
'Sunbathe, pretty till you're twenty. You shall be our servants then.'

Perfect pater. Marvellous mater. Knock the critic down who dares—  
Very well, believe it, copy, till your hair is white as theirs.

Yours you say were parents to avoid, avoid then if you please  
Do the reverse on all occasion till you catch the same disease.

When we asked the way to Heaven, these directed us ahead  
To the padded room, the clinic and the hangman's little shed.

Intimate as war-time prisoners in an isolation camp,  
Living month by month together, nervy, famished, lousy, damp.

On the sopping esplanade or from our dingy lodgings we  
Stare out dully at the rain which falls for miles into the sea.

Lawrence, Blake and Homer Lane, once healers in our English land;  
These are dead as iron for ever; these can never hold our hand.

Lawrence was brought down by smut-hounds, Blake went dotty as he sang,  
Homer Lane was killed in action by the Twickenham Baptist gang.

Have things gone too far already? Are we done for? Must we wait  
Hearing doom's approaching footsteps regular down miles of straight;

Run the whole night through in gumboots, stumble on and gasp for breath,  
Terrors drawing close and closer, winter landscape, fox's death;

Or, in friendly fireside circle, sit and listen for the crash  
Meaning that the mob has realized something's up, and start to smash;

## *Tradition and Social Change*

Engine-drivers with their oil-cans, factory girls in overalls  
Blowing sky-high monster stores, destroying intellectuals?

Hope and fear are neck and neck: which is it near the course's end  
Crashes, having lost his nerve; is overtaken on the bend?

Shut up talking, charming in the best suits to be had in town,  
Lecturing on navigation while the ship is going down.

Drop those priggish ways for ever, stop behaving like a stone:  
Throw the bath-chairs right away, and learn to leave ourselves alone.

If we really want to live, we'd better start at once to try;  
If we don't, it doesn't matter, but we'd better start to die.

## THE MILL

*by* EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON

The miller's wife had waited long,  
The tea was cold, the fire was dead;  
And there might yet be nothing wrong  
In how he went and what he said:  
"There are no millers any more,"  
Was all that she had heard him say;  
And he had lingered at the door  
So long that it seemed yesterday.

Sick with a fear that had no form  
She knew that she was there at last;  
And in the mill there was a warm  
And mealy fragrance of the past.

What else there was would only seem  
To say again what he had meant;  
And what was hanging from a beam  
Would not have heeded where she went.

And if she thought it followed her,  
She may have reasoned in the dark  
That one way of the few there were  
Would hide her and would leave no  
mark:

Black water, smooth above the weir  
Like starry velvet in the night,  
Though ruffled once, would soon appear  
The same as ever to the sight.

From E. A. Robinson, *Collected Poems*. By permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers.

## TRACTORED OFF

*by* JOHN STEINBECK

THE OWNERS of the land came onto the land, or more often a spokesman for the owners came. They came in closed cars, and they felt the dry earth with their fingers, and sometimes they drove big earth augers into the ground for soil tests.

From *The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck. Copyright 1939 by John Steinbeck. By permission of The Viking Press, Inc., New York.

## *Tractored Off*

The tenants, from their sun-beaten dooryards, watched uneasily when the closed cars drove along the fields. And at last the owner men drove into the dooryards, and sat in their cars to talk out of the windows. The tenant men stood beside the cars for a while, and then squatted on their hams and found sticks with which to mark the dust.

In the open doors the women stood looking out, and behind them the children—corn-headed children, with wide eyes, one bare foot on top of the other bare foot, and the toes working. The women and the children watched their men talking to the owner men. They were silent.

Some of the owner men were kind because they hated what they had to do, and some of them were angry because they hated to be cruel, and some of them were cold because they had long ago found that one could not be an owner unless one were cold. And all of them were caught in something larger than themselves. Some of them hated the mathematics that drove them, and some were afraid, and some worshiped the mathematics because it provided a refuge from thought and from feeling. If a bank or a finance company owned the land, the owner man said, The Bank—or the Company—needs—wants—insists—must have—as though the Bank or the Company were a monster, with thought and feeling, which had ensnared them. These last would take no responsibility for the banks or the companies because they were men and slaves, while the banks were machines and masters all at the same time. Some of the owner men were a little proud to be slaves to such cold and powerful masters. The owner men sat in the cars and explained. You know the land is poor. You've scabbled at it long enough, God knows.

The squatting tenant men nodded and wondered and drew figures in the dust, and yes, they knew, God knows. If the dust only wouldn't fly. If the top would only stay on the soil, it might not be so bad.

The owner men went on leading to their point: You know the land's getting poorer. You know what cotton does to the land; robs it, sucks all the blood out of it.

The squatters nodded—they knew, God knew. If they could only rotate the crops they might pump blood back into the land.

Well, it's too late. And the owner men explained the workings and the thinkings of the monster that was stronger than they were. A man can hold land if he can just eat and pay taxes; he can do that.

Yes, he can do that until his crops fail one day and he has to borrow money from the bank.

But—you see, a bank or a company can't do that, because those creatures don't breathe air, don't eat side-meat. They breathe profits; they eat the interest on money. If they don't get it, they die the way you die without air, without side-meat. It is a sad thing, but it is so. It is just so.

The squatting men raised their eyes to understand. Can't we just hang on? Maybe the next year will be a good year. God knows how much cotton next year. And with all the wars—God knows what price cotton will bring. Don't they make explosives out of cotton? And uniforms? Get enough wars and cotton'll hit the ceiling. Next year, maybe. They looked up questioningly.

We can't depend on it. The bank—the monster has to have profits all the time. It can't wait. It'll die. No, taxes go on. When the monster stops growing, it dies. It can't stay one size.

## *Tradition and Social Change*

Soft fingers began to tap the sill of the car window, and hard fingers tightened on the restless drawing sticks. In the doorways of the sun-beaten tenant houses, women sighed and then shifted feet so that the one that had been down was now on top, and the toes working. Dogs came sniffing near the owner cars and wetted on all four tires one after another. And chickens lay in the sunny dust and fluffed their feathers to get the cleansing dust down to the skin. In the little sties the pigs grunted inquiringly over the muddy remnants of the slops.

The squatting men looked down again. What do you want us to do? We can't take less share of the crop—we're half-starved now. The kids are hungry all the time. We got no clothes, torn an' ragged. If all the neighbors weren't the same, we'd be ashamed to go to meeting.

And at last the owner men came to the point. The tenant system won't work any more. One man on a tractor can take the place of twelve or fourteen families. Pay him a wage and take all the crop. We have to do it. We don't like to do it. But the monster's sick. Something's happened to the monster.

But you'll kill the land with cotton.

We know. We've got to take cotton quick before the land dies. Then we'll sell the land. Lots of families in the East would like to own a piece of land.

The tenant men looked up alarmed. But what'll happen to us? How'll we eat?

You'll have to get off the land. The plows'll go through the dooryard.

And now the squatting men stood up angrily. Grampa took up the land, and he had to kill the Indians and drive them away. And Pa was born here, and he killed weeds and snakes. Then a bad year came and he had to borrow a little money. An' we was born here. There in the door

—our children born here. An' Pa had to borrow money. The bank owned the land then, but we stayed and we got a little bit of what we raised.

We know that—all that. It's not us, it's the bank. A bank isn't like a man. Or an owner with fifty thousand acres, he isn't like a man either. That's the monster.

Sure, cried the tenant men, but it's our land. We measured it, and broke it up. We were born on it, and we got killed on it, died on it. Even if it's no good, it's still ours. That's what makes it ours—being born on it, working it, dying on it. That makes ownership, not a paper with numbers on it.

We're sorry. It's not us. It's the monster. The bank isn't like a man.

Yes, but the bank is only made of men.

No, you're wrong there—quite wrong there. The bank is something else than men. It happens that every man in a bank hates what the bank does, and yet the bank does it. The bank is something more than men, I tell you. It's the monster. Men made it, but they can't control it.

The tenants cried, Grampa killed Indians, Pa killed snakes for the land. Maybe we can kill banks—they're worse than Indians and snakes. Maybe we got to fight to keep our land, like Pa and Grampa did.

And now the owner men grew angry. You'll have to go.

But it's ours, the tenant men cried. We—

No. The bank, the monster owns it. You'll have to go.

We'll get our guns, like Grampa when the Indians came. What then?

Well—first the sheriff, and then the troops. You'll be stealing if you try to stay, you'll be murderers if you kill to stay. The monster isn't men, but it can make men do what it wants.

## *Tractored Off*

But if we go, where'll we go? How'll we go? We got no money.

We're sorry, said the owner men. The bank, the fifty-thousand-acre owner can't be responsible. You're on land that isn't yours. Once over the line maybe you can pick cotton in the fall. Maybe you can go on relief. Why don't you go on west to California? There's work there, and it never gets cold. Why, you can reach out anywhere and pick an orange. Why, there's always some kind of crop to work in. Why don't you go there? And the owner men started their cars and rolled away.

The tenant men squatted down on their hams again to mark the dust with a stick, to figure, to wonder. Their sunburned faces were dark, and their sun-whipped eyes were light. The women moved cautiously out of the doorways toward their men, and the children crept behind the women cautiously, ready to run. The bigger boys squatted beside their fathers, because that made them men. After a time the women asked, What did he want?

And the men looked up for a second, and the smolder of pain was in their eyes. We got to get off. A tractor and a superintendent. Like factories.

Where'll we go? the women asked.

We don't know. We don't know.

And the women went quickly, quietly back into the houses and herded the children ahead of them. They knew that a man so hurt and so perplexed may turn in anger, even on people he loves. They left the men alone to figure and to wonder in the dust.

After a time perhaps the tenant man looked about—at the pump put in ten years ago, with a gooseneck handle and iron flowers on the spout, at the chopping block where a thousand chickens had been killed, at the hand plow lying in the shed,

and the patent crib hanging in the rafters over it.

The children crowded about the women in the houses. What we going to do, Ma? Where we going to go?

The women said, We don't know, yet. Go out and play. But don't go near your father. He might whale you if you go near him. And the women went on with the work, but all the time they watched the men squatting in the dust—perplexed and figuring.

The tractors came over the roads and into the fields, great crawlers moving like insects, having the incredible strength of insects. They crawled over the ground, laying the track and rolling on it and picking it up. Diesel tractors, puttering while they stood idle; they thundered when they moved, and then settled down to a droning roar. Snub-nosed monsters, raising the dust and sticking their snouts into it, straight down the country, across the country, through fences, through dooryards, in and out of gullies in straight lines. They did not run on the ground, but on their own roadbeds. They ignored hills and gulches, watercourses, fences, houses.

The man sitting in the iron seat did not look like a man; gloved, goggled, rubber dust mask over nose and mouth, he was a part of the monster, a robot in the seat. The thunder of the cylinders sounded through the country, became one with the air and the earth, so that earth and air muttered in sympathetic vibration. The driver could not control it—straight across country it went, cutting through a dozen farms and straight back. A twitch at the controls could swerve the cat', but the driver's hands could not twitch because the monster that built the tractor, the monster that sent the tractor out, had



## *Tradition and Social Change*

somehow got into the driver's hands, into his brain and muscle, had goggled him and muzzled him—goggled his mind, muzzled his speech, goggled his perception, muzzled his protest. He could not see the land as it was, he could not smell the land as it smelled; his feet did not stamp the clods or feel the warmth and power of the earth. He sat in an iron seat and stepped on iron pedals. He could not cheer or beat or curse or encourage the extension of his power, and because of this he could not cheer or whip or curse or encourage himself. He did not know or own or trust or beseech the land. If a seed dropped did not germinate, it was nothing. If the young thrusting plant withered in drought or drowned in a flood of rain, it was no more to the driver than to the tractor.

He loved the land no more than the bank loved the land. He could admire the tractor—its machined surfaces, its surge of power, the roar of its detonating cylinders; but it was not his tractor. Behind the tractor rolled the shining disks, cutting the earth with blades—not plowing but surgery, pushing the cut earth to the right where the second row of disks cut it and pushed it to the left; slicing blades shining, polished by the cut earth. And pulled behind the disks, the harrows combing with iron teeth so that the little clods broke up and the earth lay smooth. Behind the harrows, the long seeders—twelve curved iron penes erected in the foundry, orgasms set by gears, raping methodically, raping without passion. The driver sat in his iron seat and he was proud of the straight lines he did not will, proud of the tractor he did not own or love, proud of the power he could not control. And when that crop grew, and was harvested, no man had crumbled a hot clod in his fingers and let the earth sift past his finger tips. No man

had touched the seed, or lusted for the growth. Men ate what they had not raised, had no connection with the bread. The land bore under iron, and under iron gradually died; for it was not loved or hated, it had no prayers or curses.

At noon the tractor driver stopped sometimes near a tenant house and opened his lunch: sandwiches wrapped in waxed paper, white bread, pickle, cheese, Spam, a piece of pie branded like an engine part. He ate without relish. And tenants not yet moved away came out to see him, looked curiously while the goggles were taken off, and the rubber dust mask, leaving white circles around the eyes and a large white circle around nose and mouth. The exhaust of the tractor pattered on, for fuel is so cheap it is more efficient to leave the engine running than to heat the Diesel nose for a new start. Curious children crowded close, ragged children who ate their fried dough as they watched. They watched hungrily the unwrapping of the sandwiches, and their hunger-sharpened noses smelled the pickle, cheese, and Spam. They didn't speak to the driver. They watched his hand as it carried food to his mouth. They did not watch him chewing; their eyes followed the hand that held the sandwich. After a while the tenant who could not leave the place came out and squatted in the shade beside the tractor.

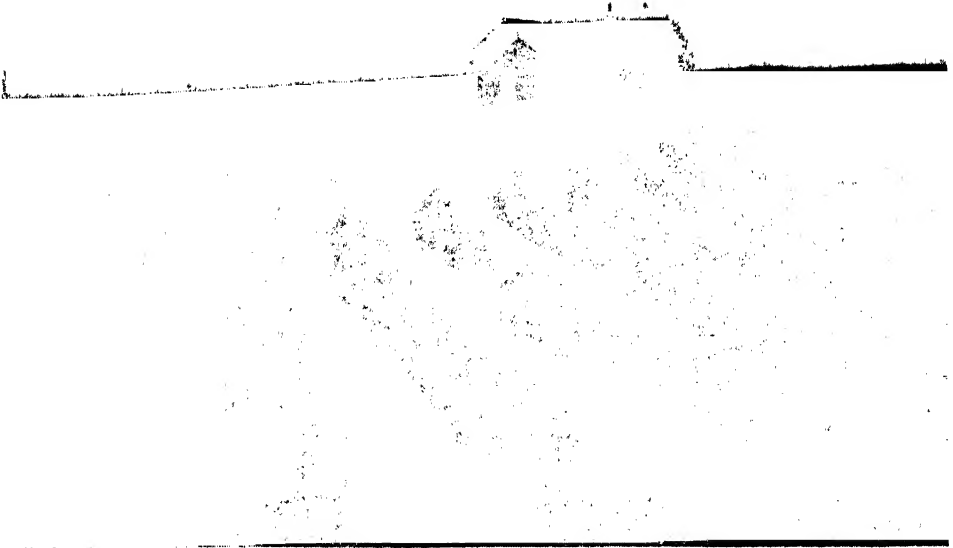
"Why, you're Joe Davis's boy!"

"Sure," the driver said.

"Well, what you doing this kind of work for—against your own people?"

"Three dollars a day. I got damn sick of creeping for my dinner—and not getting it. I got a wife and kids. We got to eat. Three dollars a day, and it comes every day."

## Tractored Off



Tractors replace not only mules, but people. They cultivate to the very door of the houses of those whom they replace—Childress County, Texas, June 1938. (From *An American Exodus* by Dorothea Lange and Paul S. Taylor, Reynal & Hitchcock, Inc., N. Y.)

"That's right," the tenant said. "But for your three dollars a day fifteen or twenty families can't eat at all. Nearly a hundred people have to go out and wander on the roads for your three dollars a day. Is that right?"

And the driver said: "Can't think of that. Got to think of my own kids. Three dollars a day, and it comes every day. Times are changing, mister, don't you know? Can't make a living on the land unless you've got two, five, ten thousand acres and a tractor. Crop land isn't for little guys like us any more. You don't kick up a howl because you can't make Fords, or because you're not the telephone company. Well, crops are like that now. Nothing to do about it. You try to get

three dollars a day some place. That's the only way."

The tenant pondered. "Funny thing how it is. If a man owns a little property, that property is him, it's part of him, and it's like him. If he owns property only so he can walk on it and handle it and be sad when it isn't doing well, and feel fine when the rain falls on it, that property is him, and some way he's bigger because he owns it. Even if he isn't successful he's big with his property. That is so."

And the tenant pondered more. "But let a man get property he doesn't see, or can't take time to get his fingers in, or can't be there to walk on it—why, then the property is the man. He can't do what he wants, he can't think what he wants.



The treeless landscape is strewn with empty houses—Near Olustee, southwestern Oklahoma, June 21, 1938. (From *An American Exodus* by Dorothea Lange and Paul S. Taylor, Reynal & Hitchcock, Inc., N. Y.)

The property is the man, stronger than he is. And he is small, not big. Only his possessions are big—and he's the servant of his property. That is so, too."

The driver munched the branded pie and threw the crust away. "Times are changed, don't you know? Thinking about stuff like that don't feed the kids. Get your three dollars a day, feed your kids. You got no call to worry about anybody's kids but your own. You get a reputation for talking like that, and you'll never get three dollars a day. Big shots won't give you three dollars a day if you worry about anything but your three dollars a day."

"Nearly a hundred people on the road for your three dollars. Where will we go?"

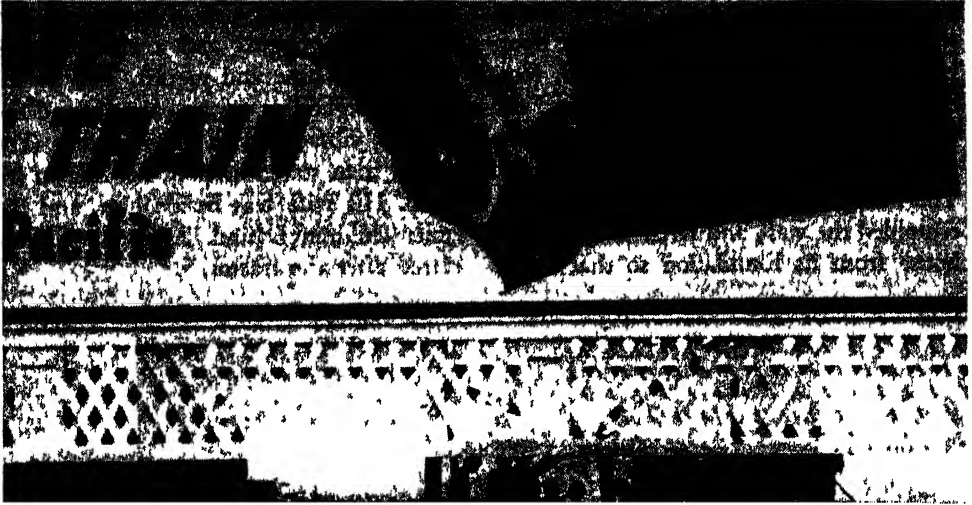
"And that reminds me," the driver said,

"you better get out soon. I'm going through the dooryard after dinner."

"You filled in the well this morning."

"I know. Had to keep the line straight. But I'm going through the dooryard after dinner. Got to keep the lines straight. And—well, you know Joe Davis, my old man, so I'll tell you this. I got orders wherever there's a family not moved out—if I have an accident—you know, get too close and cave the house in a little—well, I might get a couple of dollars. And my youngest kid never had no shoes yet."

"I built it with my hands. Straightened old nails to put the sheathing on. Rafters are wired to the stringers with baling wire. It's mine. I built it. You bump it down—I'll be in the window with a rifle. You



Three families, fourteen children—U.S. 99, San Joaquin Valley, November 1938. (From *An American Exodus* by Dorothea Lange and Paul S. Taylor, Reynal & Hitchcock, Inc., N. Y.)

even come too close and I'll pot you like a rabbit."

"It's not me. There's nothing I can do. I'll lose my job if I don't do it. And look—suppose you kill me? They'll just hang you, but long before you're hung there'll be another guy on the tractor, and he'll bump the house down. You're not killing the right guy."

"That's so," the tenant said. "Who gave you orders? I'll go after him. He's the one to kill."

"You're wrong. He got his orders from the bank. The bank told him, 'Clear those people out or it's your job.'"

"Well, there's a president of the bank. There's a board of directors. I'll fill up the magazine of the rifle and go into the bank."

The driver said: "Fellow was telling me the bank gets orders from the East. The orders were, 'Make the land show profit or we'll close you up.'"

"But where does it stop? Who can we shoot? I don't aim to starve to death before I kill the man that's starving me."

"I don't know. Maybe there's nobody to shoot. Maybe the thing isn't men at all. Maybe, like you said, the property's doing it. Anyway I told you my orders."

"I got to figure," the tenant said. "We all got to figure. There's some way to stop this. It's not like lightning or earthquakes. We've got a bad thing made by men, and by God that's something we can change." The tenant sat in his doorway, and the driver thundered his engines and started off, tracks falling and curving, harrows

### *Tradition and Social Change*

combing, and the phalli of the seeder slipping into the ground. Across the doorway the tractor cut, and the hard, foot-beaten ground was seeded field, and the tractor cut through again; the uncut space was ten feet wide. And back he came. The iron guard bit into the house-corner, crumbled the wall, and wrenched the little house from its foundation so that it fell

sideways, crushed like a bug. And the driver was goggled and a rubber mask covered his nose and mouth. The tractor cut a straight line on, and the air and the ground vibrated with its thunder. The tenant man stared after it, his rifle in his hand. His wife was beside him, and the quiet children behind. And all of them stared after the tractor.



*FSA photo by Evans.*

(From *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* by James Agee and Walker Evans, by permission of the publishers, Houghton Mifflin Company.)

## A SHORT WAIT BETWEEN TRAINS

by ROBERT McLAUGHLIN

THEY CAME into Forrest Junction at eleven-thirty in the morning. Seen from the window of their coach, it wasn't much of a town. First there were the long rows of freight cars on sidings with green-painted locomotives of the Southern Railway nosing strings of them back and forth. Then they went past the sheds of cotton ginneries abutting on the tracks. There were small frame houses with weed-choked lawns enclosed by broken picket fences, a block of frame stores with dingy windows and dark interiors, a small brick-and-concrete bank, and beyond that the angled roof and thin smokestacks of a textile mill.

The station was bigger than you would expect; it was of dirty brick and had a rolling, bungalow-type roof adorned with cupolas and a sort of desperate scrollwork. The grime of thousands of trains and fifty years gave it a patina suggesting such great age that it seemed to antedate the town.

Corporal Randolph, a big, sad Negro, said, "Here we is."

Private Brown, his pink-palmed hand closed over a comic book, looked out the window. "How long we here?" he asked.

"Until one o'clock," said Randolph, getting up. "Our train west is at one o'clock."

The two other privates—Butterfield and Jerdon—were taking down their barracks bags from the rack. Other passengers bunched in the aisles—two young colored girls in slacks; a fat, bespectacled mother and her brood, with the big-eyed child in her arms staring fixedly at the soldiers; tall, spare, colored farmers in blue overalls.

As they waited for the line to move, Jerdon said, "Who dat?"

Grinning, Brown answered, "Who dat say 'Who dat?'"

Jerdon replied in a nervous quaver, "Who dat say 'Who dat?' when I say 'Who dat?'"

They both began to laugh, and some of the passengers looked at them with half-smiles and uncertain eyes.

Butterfield said, "Even the kid thinks you're nuts."

The child in the fat woman's arms looked at him sharply as he spoke, then her eyes went back to Jerdon and Brown.

"You think I'm nuts, baby?" asked Jerdon. "Is it like the man say?"

The line of passengers began to move.

"That baby don't think I'm nuts," said Jerdon. "That baby is sure a smart baby."

Their coach was up by the engine, and they descended to the platform into a cloud of released steam, with the sharp pant of the engine seemingly at their shoulders.

A motor-driven baggage truck, operated by a colored man wearing an engineer's cap, plowed through them. The three privates, with their bags slung over their shoulders, stood watching the corporal. He was checking through the papers in a large manila envelope marked "War Department, Official Business." It contained their railway tickets and their orders to report to a camp in Arizona.

"Man," said Brown, "you better not lose anything. We don't want to stay in this place."

"This don't look like any town to me, either," said Jerdon.

Butterfield, slim, somewhat lighter in

Reprinted from *A Short Wait Between Trains* by Robert McLaughlin, by permission of Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. Copyright 1944 by Robert McLaughlin. Originally appeared in *The New Yorker*.

## *Tradition and Social Change*

complexion, and a year or two older than the others, looked around him. "Hey," he said, "look what's up there."

The others turned. Down the platform they could see two white soldiers armed with carbines and what appeared to be a group of other white soldiers in fatigues. A crowd was forming around them.

"They're prisoners of war," said Butterfield. "You want to see some Germans, Brown? You say you're going to kill a lot of them; you want to see what they look like?"

Brown said, "That what they are?"

"Sure," said Butterfield. "See what they've got on their backs? 'P.W.' That means 'prisoner of war.'"

The four soldiers moved forward. They stood on the fringe of the crowd, which was mostly white, looking at the Nazi prisoners with wide-eyed curiosity. There were twenty Germans standing in a compact group, acting rather exaggeratedly unconscious of the staring crowd. A small mound of barracks bags was in the center of the group, and the eyes of the prisoners looked above and through the crowd in quick glances at the station, the train, the seedy town beyond. They were very reserved, very quiet, and their silence put a silence on the crowd.

One of the guards spoke to a prisoner in German, and the prisoner gave an order to his fellows. They formed up in a rough double column and moved off.

Little boys in the crowd ran off after them and the knot of watchers broke up.

When the four soldiers were alone again, Brown said, "They don't look like much. They don't look no different."

"What did you think they'd look like?" Butterfield asked.

"I don't know," said Brown.

"Man, you just don't know nothing,"

said Jerdon. "You're just plain ignorant."

"Well, what did *you* think they'd look like?" Butterfield asked Jerdon.

Jerdon shifted his feet and didn't look at Butterfield or answer him directly. "That Brown, he just don't know nothing," he repeated. He and Brown began to laugh; they were always dissolving in laughter at obscure jokes of their own.

A trainman got up on the steps of one of the coaches, moved his arm in a wide arc; the pant of the locomotive changed to a short puffing, and the train jerked forward.

The colored baggageman came trundling back in his empty truck, and Corporal Randolph said to him, "They any place we can leave these bags?"

The baggageman halted. "You taking the one o'clock?"

"That's right."

"Dump them on the truck. I'll keep them for you."

Randolph said, "Any place we can eat around here?"

"No, they ain't."

"Where we have to go?"

"They ain't no place," the baggageman said, looking at them as though curious to see how they'd take it.

"Man," said Jerdon, "we're hungry. We got to eat."

"Maybe you get a handout someplace," said the baggageman, "but they sure no place for colored around here."

Butterfield said sourly, "We'll just go to the U.S.O."

"Oh, man, that's rich," Brown said, and he and Jerdon laughed.

"They got a U.S.O. in this here town?" Jerdon asked the baggageman.

"Not for you they ain't," said the baggageman.

## *A Short Wait Between Trains*

"Man, ain't that the truth," replied Jerdon.

Randolph said stubbornly, "We got to get something to eat."

The baggageman said, "You want to walk to Rivertown you get something. That the only place, though."

"Where's Rivertown?" Butterfield asked.

"Take the main road down past the mill. It's about three, four miles."

"Hell, man," said Jerdon, "I'm hungry now. I don't have to walk no four miles to get hungry."

"You stay hungry, then," said the baggageman, and went off.

"Well, ain't this just dandy?" said Brown.

The men all looked at Corporal Randolph, who transferred the manila envelope from one hand to the other, his heavy face wearing an expression of indecision.

Butterfield said, "There's a lunchroom in the station. You go tell them they've got to feed us."

Randolph said angrily, "You heard the man. You heard him say there's no place to eat."

"You're in charge of us," Butterfield said. "You've got to find us a place to eat."

"I can't find nothing that ain't there."

"You're just afraid to go talk to them," said Butterfield. "That's all that's the matter with you."

Brown said, "Corporal, you just let Mr. Butterfield handle this. He'll make them give us something to eat." He and Jerdon began to laugh.

"O.K.," said Butterfield. "I'll do it."

Brown and Jerdon looked at Randolph.

"My God," said Butterfield, "you even afraid to come with me while I ask them?"

"You're awful loud-talking—" Randolph began, angrily but defensively.

"You coming with me or not?" Butterfield asked.

"We're coming with you," Randolph said.

The four soldiers went into the colored section of the station and walked through it and into the passage that led to the main entrance. The lunchroom was right next to the white waiting room. The four men moved up to the door, bunching a little as though they were soldiers under fire for the first time.

Butterfield opened the screen door of the lunchroom and they followed him in. There were five or six tables and a lunch counter and, although it was around twelve, only a few diners. A cashier's desk and cigarette counter was by the door, and seated behind it was a gray-haired woman, stout and firm-chinned and wearing glasses.

Butterfield went up to her, rested his hands on the edge of the counter, and then hastily removed them.

She looked up.

Butterfield said quickly, "Is there any place we could get something to eat, ma'am?"

She looked at him steadily, then her eyes shifted to the others, who were looking elaborately and with desperation at their shoes.

"This all of you?" asked the woman.

"Yes, ma'am, there's just us four."

"All right," she said. "Go out to the kitchen. They'll feed you."

"Thank you, ma'am."

Butterfield, trailed by the others, started back toward the kitchen.

"Just a minute," said the woman. "Go out and around to the back."



## *Tradition and Social Change*

They turned, bumping each other a little, and went back out the door.

Brown said, when they were outside, "Mr. Butterfield, he sure do it."

"That's right," said Jerdon. "You want to look out, Corporal. That Butterfield, he'll be getting your stripes."

Butterfield and Randolph didn't answer, didn't look at each other.

In the kitchen they found a thin, aged colored man in a white apron and a young, thick-bodied colored girl who was washing dishes.

"What you want?" asked the cook.

"Something to eat."

"Man, we're hungry," Jerdon told him. "We ain't put nothing inside us since before sunup. Ain't that right, Brown?"

"Since before sunup *yesterday*," said Brown.

"The lady say you come back here?" asked the cook.

"That right."

The cook took their orders and, as he worked, asked them what camp they were from, where they were going, how long they'd been in the Army. He told them about his two sons who were in the Engineers at Fort Belvoir.

"Labor troops," said Butterfield. "A bunch of ditchdiggers and road menders."

The cook stared at him. "What the matter with you, man?"

Butterfield didn't answer. He lit a cigarette and walked to the serving window, looking out at the woman at the cashier's desk.

Brown and Jerdon went over to the girl washing dishes, and Corporal Randolph, his manila envelope under his arm, listened mournfully to the cook.

Suddenly Butterfield threw away his half-smoked cigarette and called to the others, "Come here and look at this."

"What?" said Randolph.

"You come here and see this."

They all came over, the cook, the girl, the three other soldiers.

Sitting down at the tables in the lunchroom were the twenty German prisoners. One of their guards was at the door with his carbine slung over his shoulder; the other was talking to the cashier. The other diners were staring at the Nazis in fascination. The prisoners sat relaxed and easy at the tables, lighting cigarettes, drinking water, taking rolls from the baskets on their tables, and munching them un buttered, their eyes incurious, their attitudes casual.

"God damn! Look at that," said Butterfield. "We don't amount to as much here as the men we're supposed to fight. Look at them, sitting there like kings, and we can't get a scrap to eat in this place without bending our knee and sneaking out to the kitchen like dogs or something."

The cook said severely, "Where you from, boy?"

"He from Trenton, New Jersey," said Brown.

Butterfield stared around at them and saw that only Randolph and the cook even knew what he was talking about and that they were both looking at him with troubled disapproval. Brown and Jerdon and the girl just didn't care. He turned and crossed the kitchen and went out the back door.

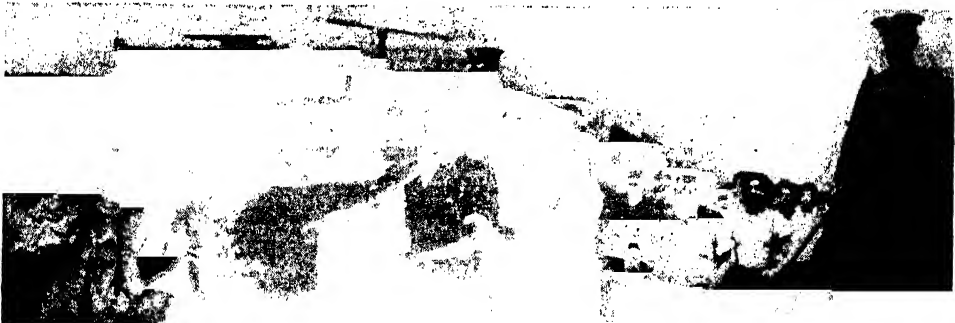
The cook said to Randolph, "I'll wrap some sandwiches for him and you give them to him on the train." He shook his head. "All the white folks around here is talking about all the nigger killing they going to do after the war. That boy, he sure to be one of them."

Randolph cracked his big knuckles unhappily. "We all sure to be one of them," he said. "The Lord better have mercy on us all."



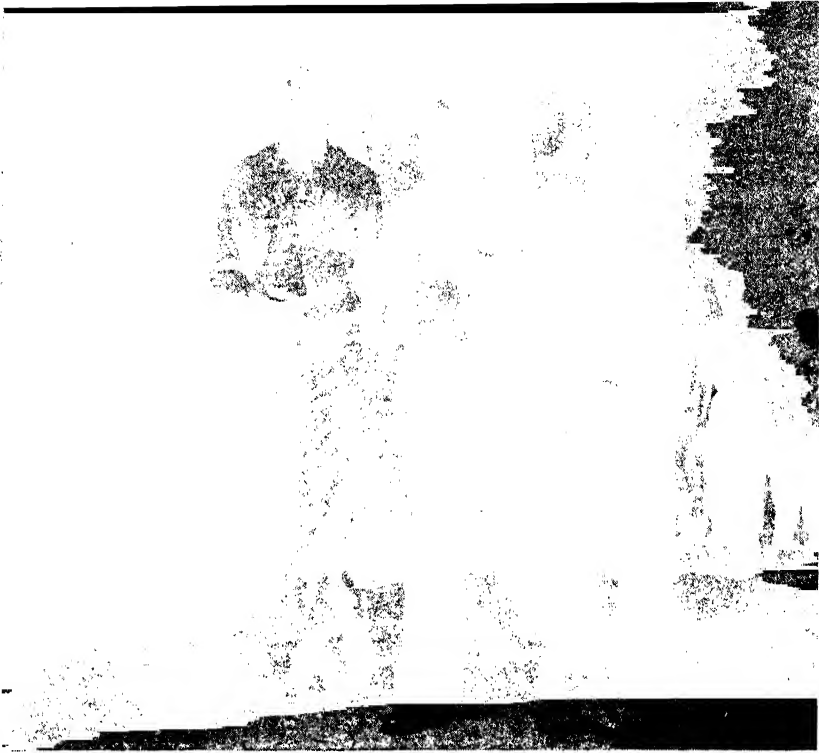
*International News Photo*

This Negro (center) has just been slugged by young white hoodlums in Detroit's race riot and is frantically trying to escape before they hit him again. (*Life*, July 5, 1943.)



*Press Association, Inc.*

Rioter slaps a Negro who is being held by two policemen. . . . Throughout the riot the Detroit police were tougher on Negroes than whites. They used tear gas and (sometimes) night sticks on white mobs, tommy guns and pistols on Negroes. They killed 15 Negroes, most of whom were said to be "looting," and no whites, although white gangs overturned police cars and beat up policemen in rescuing rioters who had been arrested. (*Life*, July 5, 1943.)



*International News Photo*

Beaten Negro, still clutching his blood-stained hat, is helped to safety by two white youths. Negroes reported many instances of white aid during the riot. Some white streetcar passengers hid Negroes under their seats and sat on top of them to keep them away from the rioters. (*Life*, July 5, 1943.)

## THE TOUCHIN' CASE OF MR. AND MRS. MASSA

*by* ST. CLAIR MCKELWAY

Oh, let's fix us a julep and kick us a houn'  
(Sing "Yassah! Yassah! Yassah!")  
And let's dig a place in de col', col' groun'  
For Mr. and Mrs. Massa!

[*Boogie-woogie*]

Oh, this Mr. and Mrs. Massa have always  
lived in old Virginia and old North Carolina  
and old South Carolina and old Alabama  
and old Kentucky and old So Forth  
and old So On and nobody has ever un-

derstood the colored people the way they  
do because down in old So Forth and old  
So On is where the white folks understand  
the colored folks like no other white  
folks on earth understand colored folks.  
Yassah, Massa! Yassah!

[*Boogie-woogie*]

Oh, before the war and for some time  
afterward Mr. and Mrs. Massa understood  
the colored folks so well that they had a

Permission *The New Yorker*. Copyright 1943 by The F.R. Publishing Corporation.

## *The Touchin' Case of Mr. and Mrs. Massa*

washerwoman they paid \$1.50 a week and a cook they paid \$1.75 a week and a butler they paid \$2.25 a week and it was mighty lucky for these colored folks that the washerwoman was the cook's mother and the butler was the cook's husband because this enabled the three of them to live cozily in the fifth one-room shack from the left on the other side of the railroad tracks and thus pay \$0.85 less a week for rent than the total of their combined salaries.

[*Boogie-woogie*]

Oh, and over and above the total of their combined salaries Mrs. Massa every other week gave the cook a ham bone outright and Mr. Massa every other month gave the butler a whole quarter of a dollar extra right out of a clear sky. It was manna, Mammy! Manna!

[*Boogie-woogie*]

Oh, but after the war had been going along for a while the butler, whose name was Charles F. Parker, came to Mr. Massa and told him he was going to quit because he had been offered a job as a counterman in the cafeteria of a defense plant at a salary of \$15 a week plus three meals a day and Mr. Massa understood the colored folks so well he told Charles F. Parker that up to then he (Mr. Massa) had been able through influence to persuade the local draft board not to draft him (Charles F. Parker) but that if he (Charles F. Parker) quit his job as butler he (Mr. Massa) would have to persuade the draft board to go ahead and draft him (Charles F. Parker). Swing low, sweet Lincoln!

[*Boogie-woogie*]

Oh, but then Charles F. Parker told Mr. Massa that as he (Charles F. Parker) un-

derstood the situation after conversations with the draft board he (Charles F. Parker) had already been classed as 4-F owing to a number of physical disabilities, including chronic hoecake poisoning, and that therefore he thought he would take the job at the defense-plant cafeteria but with all due respect to Mr. Massa, etc. and etc. Hit that hoecake, boys! Hit it!

[*Boogie-woogie*]

Oh, so Mr. and Mrs. Massa saw the straws in the wind, saw which way the wind was blowing, and also recognized the trend of the time, so they took another tack, changed face, turned over new leaves, and each gave Charles F. Parker fifteen cents as a bonus and wished him success in his new job and raised the washerwoman (Esther G. Henderson) from \$1.50 a week to \$1.75 a week and raised the cook (Mrs. Charles F. Parker) from \$1.75 a week to \$1.85 a week with the understanding that Mrs. Esther G. Henderson would help out Mrs. Charles F. Parker in the kitchen and that Mrs. Charles F. Parker would wait on the table. Pass the hominy grits, boys! Pass it!

[*Boogie-woogie*]

Oh, but at the end of the first week under the new arrangement Mrs. Charles F. Parker came to Mrs. Massa and said she was going to quit because she had been offered a job as cook at the defense-plant cafeteria at a salary of \$22.50 per week plus three meals a day and Mrs. Massa jus' had to cry. Weep some mo', my lady, oh, weep some mo'!

[*Boogie-woogie*]

Oh, and then the washerwoman (Esther G. Henderson) came to Mrs. Massa and said she was going to quit because she was eighty-two years old and her back

## *Tradition and Social Change*

ached and her daughter and son-in-law were going to support her for nothing, and Mrs. Massa jus' had to cry some mo'l

[*Boogie-woogie*]

Oh, and then one day a week after that Mr. and Mrs. Massa were walking back home after a dinner at the Old Southern Greek Chophouse and they saw Charles F. Parker and Mrs. Charles F. Parker and Esther G. Henderson coming out of the colored section of a movie house after having seen a Technicolored feature featuring Jack Benny and Mr. and Mrs. Massa noticed that Charles F. Parker had on a new suit and looked happy and that Mrs. Charles F. Parker had on a new dress and looked happy and that Esther G. Henderson had on a new shawl and looked happy and moreover was still laughing at the jokes Jack Benny had made inside the movie house and Mr. and Mrs. Massa saw the three of them go into a three-room stucco bungalow where Esther G. Henderson had a room all to herself and Mr. and Mrs. Charles F. Parker had a room all to themselves and then Mr. and Mrs. Massa looked at each other understandingly and tears came into the eyes of Mrs. Massa and Mr. Massa put his hand on her shoulder and said to her softly, "Nevah you mind, there'll be a reckonin' one of these days!"

[*Boogie-woogie*]

Oh, and so Mr. and Mrs. Massa finally closed up the house in old So Forth and old So On and came to New York and leased a suite at the Savoy-Plaza and the Savoy-Netherlands and the Savoy-So Forth and the Savoy-So On and any time you want to listen day or night as well as any time you don't want to listen day or night they will tell you for hours without stopping how they understand the colored people like no other white folks on earth understand colored folks and how the war and high wages are jus' ruinin' everything down in old So Forth and old So On and how never you mind there's goin' to be a reckonin' one of these days. Reckon twice and hit it again, boys! Hit it!

[*Boogie-woogie*]

Oh, and the bones of Mr. and Mrs. Massa are not growing cold and their heads are not bending low and no angel voices are calling to them and if nobody will carry them back to old So Forth and old So On, oh, then . . .

[*Boogie-woogie*]

Let's fix us a julep and kick us a houn'  
(Sing "Yassah! Yassah! Yassah!")  
And let's dig a place in de col', col' groun'  
For Mr. and Mrs. Massa!

## THE LITTLE BLACK BOY

by WILLIAM BLAKE

My mother bore me in the southern wild,  
And I am black, but O my soul is white;  
White as an angel is the English child,  
But I am black, as if bereaved of light.

From *Songs of Innocence* by William Blake, first published in 1789.

## *The Races of Mankind*

My mother taught me underneath a tree,  
And, sitting down before the heat of day,  
She took me on her lap and kissèd me,  
And, pointing to the east, began to say:

"Look on the rising sun,—there God does live,  
And gives his light, and gives his heat away;  
And flowers and trees and beasts and men receive  
Comfort in morning, joy in the noon-day.

"And we are put on earth-a little space,  
That we may learn to bear the beams of love;  
And these black bodies and this sunburnt face  
Is but a cloud, and like a shady grove.

"For when our souls have learned the heat to bear,  
The cloud will vanish, we shall hear his voice,  
Saying: 'come out from the grove, my love and care,  
And round my golden tent like lambs rejoice.'"

Thus did my mother say, and kissèd me;  
And thus I say to little English boy.  
When I from black, and he from white cloud free,  
And round the tent of God like lambs we joy,

I'll shade him from the heat, till he can bear  
To lean in joy upon our father's knee;  
And then I'll stand and stroke his silver hair,  
And be like him, and he will then love me.

## THE RACES OF MANKIND

by RUTH BENEDICT and GENE WELTFISH

THIRTY-FOUR NATIONS are now united in a common cause—victory over Axis aggression, the military destruction of fascism. This is the greatest fighting alliance of nations in history. These United Nations include the most different physical types of men, the most unlike beliefs, the most varied ways of life. White men, yellow men, black men, and the so-called "red men" of America, peoples of the East and the West, of the tropics and the arctic, are fighting together against one enemy. Every morning in the newspapers and on the bulletin boards we read of yester-

From *The Races of Mankind*, by Ruth Benedict and Gene Weltfish, published by the Public Affairs Committee, Inc., New York 20, N. Y.

## *Tradition and Social Change*

day's battles in Russia, in China, in Italy, in the Solomon Islands, and in New Guinea. One day's hop in a plane can carry us across the oceans. Our supply ships go to every corner of the globe. On the radio we hear men reporting on the spot from Cairo and Australia. Burma is much closer to us today than New Orleans was to Washington at the time of the War of 1812. Distance then was a hard fact; it had not been scaled down by the triumphs of human invention.

This war, for the first time, has brought home to Americans the fact that the whole world has been made one neighborhood. All races of man are shoulder to shoulder. Our armed forces are in North Africa with its Negro, Berber, and Near-East peoples. They are in India. They are in China. They are in the Solomons with its dark-skinned, "strong"-haired Melane- sians. Our neighbors now are peoples of all the races of the earth.

For Americans this is not so new an experience as it is to people of most nations. In our country men of different color, hair texture, and head shape have lived together since the founding of our nation. They are citizens of the United States. Negroes and whites, Indians, Mexicans, Chinese, and people from the European nations are all taxable, subject to the draft and to the other laws of the land. They are part of our great national community. History today is only bringing together on a world scale races which have been brought together on a smaller scale here in America.

Americans know better than most how much hard feeling there can be when people of different races and nationalities have to live together and be part of one community. They know that there is often conflict. Today, when what we all want

more than anything else is to win this war, most Americans are confident that, whatever our origins, we shall be able to pull together to a final victory. Hitler, though, has always believed we were wrong; he has believed that hard feeling would break out and leave us defeated. He has been sure that he could "divide and conquer." He has believed that he could convince non-white races in Asia and Africa that this is a "white man's war." He has believed especially that America was a no man's land, where peoples of all origins were ready to fall to fighting among themselves. He believes that this is a front on which we are doomed to lose the battle. It is certainly a front no less important in this war than the Production Front and the Inflation Front.

In any great issue that concerns this war we turn to science. When we need new fuels, substitutes for rubber, lighter metals, or new plastics, we ask scientists to tell us what is possible and what is impossible. The chemists tell us how to make the plastics we need, and the physicists tell us how to detect and locate an approaching airplane, and the engineers tell us how to build a better fighting plane. When we are faced with war shortages, they tell us what essential materials we have been throwing out on the dump heap.

We need the scientist just as much on the race front. Scientists have studied race. Historians have studied the history of all nations and peoples. Sociologists have studied the way in which peoples band together. Biologists have studied how man's physical traits are passed down from one generation to the next. Anthropologists have studied man's bodily measurements and his cultural achievements. Psycholo-

## *The Races of Mankind*

gists have studied intelligence among different races. All that the scientists have learned is important to us at this crucial moment of history. They can tell us: "This is so," "This is not so," "This occurs under certain conditions," or "This occurs under opposite conditions."

This booklet cannot tell you all that science has learned about the races of mankind, but it states facts that have been learned and verified. We need them.

The Bible story of Adam and Eve, father and mother of the whole human race, told centuries ago the same truth that science has shown today: that all the peoples of the earth are a single family and have a common origin. Science describes the intricate make-up of the human body: all its different organs co-operating in keeping us alive, its curious anatomy that couldn't possibly have "just happened" to be the same in all men if they did not have a common origin. Take the structure of the human foot, for instance. When you list all the little bones and muscles and the joints of the toes, it is impossible to imagine that that would all have happened twice. Or take our teeth: so many front teeth, so many canines, so many molars. Who can imagine finding the same arrangements in two human species if they weren't one family?

The fact of the unity of the human race is proved, therefore, in its anatomy. It is proved also by the close similarity in what all races are physically fitted for. No difference among human races has affected limbs and teeth and relative strength so that one race is biologically outfitted like a lion and another biologically outfitted like a lamb. All races of men can either plow or fight, and all the racial differences among them are in non-essentials such as

texture of head hair, amount of body hair, shape of the nose or head, or color of the eyes and the skin. The white race is the hairiest, but a white man's hair isn't thick enough to keep him warm in cold climates. The Negro's dark skin gives him some protection against strong sunlight in the tropics, and white men often have to take precautions against sunstroke. But the war has shown that white men can work and fight even in a tropical desert. Today white men in hot countries wear sun helmets and protect themselves with clothes and rub their skin with sun-tan oil. Very dark-skinned people in the North, too, can add cod-liver oil and orange juice to their diet, and, if they need to, take a vitamin pill or two. The shape of the head, too, is a racial trait; but whether it is round or long, it can house a good brain.

The races of mankind are what the Bible says they are—brothers. In their bodies is the record of their brotherhood.

### *What Are Race Differences?*

The greatest adventure story in the history of the world is the spread of early man to all corners of the globe. With crude tools, without agriculture, without domesticated animals except the dog, he pressed on, from somewhere in Asia to the tip of Africa, to the British Isles, across Bering Strait into America and down to Cape Horn. He occupied the islands of the Pacific and the continent of Australia. The world had a small population then, and many of these pioneers were for centuries as separated from other peoples as if they lived on another planet. Slowly they developed physical differences.

Those who settled nearer the equator, whether in Europe, Asia, or in the Amer-



## *Tradition and Social Change*

icas, developed a darker skin color than those who settled to the north of them. People's hair is often the same over great areas: frizzly hair, lank hair, wavy hair. Europeans remained quite hairy, but in some parts of the world body hair almost disappeared. Blue eyes appeared in the north. In some places in Asia a fold of skin developed over the inner corner of the eye and produced what we call a slant eye.

All these distinctive traits made it easy to recognize people as belonging to different parts of the world. In each place the people got used to looking at one another. They said, "Our men are really men. Our women are beautiful. This is the way people should look." Sometimes they liked the appearance of their close neighbors. But strangers seemed odd and queer. Strangers wore funny clothes and their manners were bad. Even more important, strangers did not look the way people should. Their noses were too flat or too pointed. Their skin was "a sickly white" or "a dirty black." They were too fat or too short. Everywhere in the world men and women used the standard of their own people to judge others and thought that people who differed from this standard looked funny or ugly.

After the discovery of America by Columbus, Europeans began traveling to every quarter of the globe, and all the new peoples they met were complete strangers to them. For one thing, the Europeans couldn't understand their languages. They looked and acted strange. Europeans thought they were different creatures and named a lot of different "races." Gradually the Europeans described each one as having a skin color, kind of hair, kind of lips, height, and head shape that was

peculiar to that "race." Nowadays we know that this was a false impression.

Take height, for example. There are tall and short people almost everywhere in the world. Near the sources of the Nile the Shilluk Negroes are six feet two inches; their neighbors, the brown pygmies, are four feet eight inches. In Italy a six-footer and a five-footer could both be native Italians for generations back. Among the Arizona Indians the Hopi Pueblos are five feet four inches; their Mohave neighbors are nearly six feet.

A report of the Selective Service System of November 10, 1941, showed that registrants examined for the United States Army varied in height from four feet six inches to seven feet four inches. This represents the extremes of height anywhere in the world. The Army's limits for acceptance, from five feet to six feet six inches, would include most men the world over.

Take the shape of the head as another example. In West Africa there are more long heads; in the Congo, more round. Among the American Indians, as well as in the population of Europe, both the longest and the roundest heads are to be found, and in Asia Minor long heads and round heads appear among very close relatives.

Or let us take the brain itself. Because the brain is the thinking organ, some scientists have tried to find differences in the size and structure of the brain among different groups of people. In spite of these efforts, using the finest microscopes, the best scientists cannot tell from examining a brain to what group of people its owner belonged. The *average* size of the brain is different in different groups, but it has been proved over and over again that the size of the brain has nothing to do with intelligence. Some of the most brilliant men in the world have had very small

## *The Races of Mankind*

brains. On the other hand, the world's largest brain belongs to an imbecile.

For ages men have spoken of "blood relations" as if different peoples had different blood. Some people have shouted that if we got into our veins the blood of someone with a different head shape, eye color, hair texture, or skin color, we should get some of that person's physical and mental characteristics.

Modern science has revealed this to be pure superstition. All human blood is the same, whether it is the blood of an Eskimo or a Frenchman, of the "purest" German "Aryan" or an African pygmy—except for one medically important difference. This medical difference was discovered when doctors first began to use blood transfusion in order to save life. In early attempts at transfusion it was discovered that "agglutination," or clumping together, of the red cells sometimes occurred and caused death. Gradually investigators learned that there are four types of blood, called O, A, B, and AB, and that although blood typed O can be mixed successfully with the other three, none of these can be mixed with one another without clumping.

These four types of blood are inherited by each child from its forebears. But whites, Negroes, Mongols, and all races of man have all these blood types. The color of their skin does not tell at all which blood type they have. You and an Australian bushman may have the same blood type. Because you inherit your bodily traits from your many different ancestors, you may have a different blood type from your mother or your father or your brothers and sisters. You may have eyes like your mother's, teeth and hair like your father's, feet like your grandfather's, and a blood type like your great-grandmother's.

Today doctors do not "type" blood for transfusion at all. The red and white cells

or corpuscles are removed, and the remainder is the same whatever race it comes from. The Blood Bank calls it plasma. It is dried and kept indefinitely. When needed for emergency transfusions, it is mixed with water and can save the life of any man or woman in the world. The same blood plasma is used to restore any man of any color who has been wounded in battle.

Finally, let us take skin color, the most noticeable of the differences between peoples. Few traits have been used as widely to classify people. We all talk about black, white, and yellow races of man.

In the world today the darkest people are in West Africa, the lightest people in northwest Europe, while in southeast Asia are men with yellowish-tan skins. Most people in the world, however, are not of these extremes but are in-betweens. These in-betweens probably have the skin shades that were once most common, the white, yellow, and dark brown or black being extreme varieties.

Recently scientists found that skin color is determined by two special chemicals. One of these, *carotene*, gives a yellow tinge; the other, *melanin*, contributes the brown. These colors, along with the pinkish tinge that comes when the blood vessels show through, give various shades to the human skin. Every person, however light or dark his skin may appear, has some of each of these materials in his skin. The one exception is the albino, who lacks coloring substances—and albinos appear among dark- and light-skinned peoples alike. People of browner complexions simply have more *melanin* in their skin, people of yellowish color more *carotene*. It is not an all-or-nothing difference; it is a difference in proportion. Your skin color is due to the amount of these chemicals present in the skin.

## *Tradition and Social Change*

### *How Are Races Classified?*

The three primary races of the world are the Caucasian Race, the Mongoloid Race, and the Negroid Race.

The Caucasian Race inhabits Europe and a great part of the Near East and India. It is subdivided in broad bands that run east and west: Nordics (fair-skinned, blue-eyed, tall and long-headed) are most common in the north; Alpines (in-between skin color, often stocky, broad-headed) in the middle; Mediterraneans (slender, often darker than Alpines, long-headed) in the south. The distribution of racial subtypes is just about the same in Germany and in France; both are mostly Alpine and both have Nordics in their northern districts. Racially, France and Germany are made up of the same stocks in just about equal proportions.

American Indians are Mongoloid, though they differ physically both among themselves and from the Mongols of China.

The natives of Australia are sometimes called a fourth primary race. They are as hairy as Europeans, and yet they live in an area where other peoples have very little body hair.

Aryans, Jews, Italians are *not* races. Aryans are people who speak Indo-European, "Aryan" languages. Hitler uses the term in many ways—sometimes for blond Europeans, including the Scandinavians; sometimes for Germans, whether blond or brunet; sometimes for all who agree with him politically, including the Japanese. As Hitler uses it, the term "Aryan" has no meaning, racial, linguistic, or otherwise.

Jews are people who practice the Jewish religion. They are of all races, even Negro and Mongolian. European Jews are of many different biological types; physi-

cally they resemble the populations among whom they live. The so-called "Jewish type" is a Mediterranean type, and no more "Jewish" than the South Italian. Wherever Jews are persecuted or discriminated against, they cling to their old ways and keep apart from the rest of the population and develop so-called "Jewish" traits. But these are not racial or "Jewish"; they disappear under conditions where assimilation is easy.

Italians are a nationality. Italians are of many different racial strains; the "typical" South Italian is a Mediterranean, more like the Spaniard or the Greek or the Levantine Jew than the blond North Italian. The Germans, the Russians, and all other nations of Europe are *nations*, not races. They are bound together, not by their head shape and their coloring, but by their national pride, their love of their farms, their local customs, their language, and the like.

As far back in time as the scientist can go he finds proof that animals and men moved about in the world. There were different kinds of animals, and many of them went great distances. But wherever they went, the different kinds could not breed together. A tiger cannot mate with an elephant. Even a fox and a wolf cannot mate with each other. But whenever groups of people have traveled from one place to another and met other people, some of them have married and had children.

At first men had to travel by foot. It took them a long time, but they got almost all over the world that way. Long ago, when people knew only how to make tools out of stone, the Cro-Magnons lived in Europe. Waves of migration came in from the east and the southeast. These

## *The Races of Mankind*

new people settled down, bred with the Cro-Magnons, and their children were the ancestors of modern Europeans. Since then there have been many migrations from Asia and northern Africa.

Later men tamed the horse. They built carts and rode horseback. They built great boats, which were rowed by hundreds of men. They could go faster and travel farther than ever before. The Phoenicians went on trading expeditions through the Mediterranean. The Romans went to Spain and up along the coast to the British Isles. Then the Huns swept in from Asia through central Europe and destroyed the Roman Empire. The Tartars came in from the east. They threatened to conquer all of Europe but were defeated in one of the greatest cavalry engagements of all time. The Mohammedans captured all of North Africa; they took Spain and went on up into France across the Pyrenees. Thousands of Negro slaves have been brought into Europe at various times. Where are they now? Peoples have come and gone in Europe for centuries. Wherever they went, some of them settled down and left children. Small groups were absorbed into the total population. Always the different races moved about and intermarried.

We are used to thinking of Americans as mixed. All of us have ancestors who came from regions far apart. But we think that the English are English and the French are French. This is true for their nationality, just as we are all Americans. But it is not true for their *race*. The Germans have claimed to be a pure German race, but no European is a pure anything. A country has a population. It does not have a race. If you go far enough back in the populations of Europe you are apt to find all kinds of ancestors: Cro-Mag-

nons, Slavs, Mongols, Africans, Celts, Saxons, and Teutons.

It is true, though, that people who live closer together intermarry more frequently. This is why there are places like Alsace-Lorraine, where Germans and French have intermarried so much that the children cannot tell whether they are German or French and so call themselves Alsatians. Czechoslovakia included old Bohemia, which had a population of Nordics and semi-Asiatics and Slavs. After World War I the Germans and the Czechs along the border between the two countries intermarried so often that the Germans of this section got to look like Czechs and the Czechs began to speak German. But this did not make the two countries love each other.

People of every European nation have racial brothers in other countries, often ones with which they are at war. If at any one moment you could sort into one camp all the people in the world who were most Mediterranean, no mystic sense of brotherhood would unite them. Neither camp would have language or nationality or mode of life to unite them. The old fights would break out again unless social conditions were changed—the old hatred between national groups, the old antagonisms between ruler and ruled and between the exploiter and the exploited.

The movements of peoples over the face of the earth inevitably produce race mixture and have produced it since before history began. No one has been able to show that this is necessarily bad. It has sometimes been a social advantage, sometimes a running sore threatening the health of the whole society. It can obviously be made a social evil, and, where it is so, sensible people will avoid contributing to it by grieving if their children

## *Tradition and Social Change*

make such alliances. We must live in the world as it is. But, as far as we know, there are no immutable laws of nature that make racial intermixture harmful.

When they study racial differences, scientists investigate the way by which particular traits are passed on from parents to children. They measure head form and identify skin color on a color chart. They map out the distribution of different kinds of hair or noses in the world. Scientists recognize that these differences do not themselves show better or worse qualities in peoples, any more than bay horses are better than black ones. They knew that to prove that a bay horse is superior to a black one you have to do more than identify its skin color on a color chart; you have to test its abilities.

Science therefore treats human racial differences as facts to be studied and mapped. It treats racial superiorities as a separate field of investigation; it looks for evidence. When a Nazi says, "I am a blue-eyed Aryan and you are non-Aryan," he means, "I am superior and you are inferior." The scientist says: "Of course. You are a fair-haired, long-headed, tall North European (the anthropological term is Nordics, not Aryans), and I am a dark-haired, round-headed, less tall South European. But on what evidence do you base your claim to be superior? That is quite different."

Race prejudice turns on this point of inferiority and superiority. The man with race prejudice says of a man of another race, "No matter who he is, I don't have to compare myself with him. I'm superior anyway. I was born that way."

It is the study of racial superiorities and inferiorities, therefore, which is most important in race relations. This investiga-

tion, to have any meaning at all, must get evidence for and against the man who says, "I was *born* that way. My race is proof that I am the better man." It must be an investigation of what is better and what is worse in traits passed down by inheritance. Such traits are, by definition, racial. The first thing we want to know scientifically is what traits a man is born with and what things happen to him after he is born. If he is lucky after he is born, he will have good food, good care, good education, and a good start in life; these are not things of which he can boast: "I was *born* that way."

A man learns the language he speaks. If he'd been born of Nordic parents and brought up from infancy in China, he'd speak Chinese like a native and have as much difficulty learning Swedish when he was grown as if he'd been born of Chinese parents. He wasn't "born" to speak cockney English or to speak with a Brooklyn accent; he speaks the way people around him speak. It's not a racial trait; he didn't inherit it.

Differences in customs among peoples of the world are not a matter of race either. One race is not "born" to marry in church after a boy-and-girl courtship and another race to marry "blind" with a bride the groom has never seen carried veiled to his father's house. One race is not "born" equipped to build skyscrapers and put plumbing in their houses and another to run up flimsy shelters and carry their water from the river. All these things are "learned behavior," and even in the white race there are many millions who don't have our forms of courtship and marriage and who live in shacks. When a man boasts of his racial superiority and says that he was "born that way," perhaps

## The Races of Mankind

what he's really saying is that he had a lot of luck after he was born. A man of another race might have been his equal if he'd had the same luck in his life. Science insists that race does not account for all human achievements.

The most careful investigations of intelligence have been made in America among Negroes and whites. The scientist realizes that every time he measures intelligence in any man, black or white, his results show the intelligence that man was born with *plus* what happened to him since he was born. The scientist has a lot of proof of this. For instance, in the First World War intelligence tests were given to the American Expeditionary Forces; they showed that Negroes made a lower score on intelligence tests than whites. But the tests also showed that Northerners, *black and white*, had higher scores than Southerners, *black and white*. Everyone knows that Southerners are inborn equals of Northerners, but in 1917 many Southern states' per capita expenditures for schools were only fractions of those in Northern states, and housing and diet and income were far below average too. Since the vast majority of Negroes lived in the South, their score on the intelligence test was a score they got not only as Negroes, but as Americans who had grown up under poor conditions in the South. Scientists therefore compared the scores of Southern whites and Northern Negroes.

### MEDIAN SCORES ON A.E.F. INTELLIGENCE TESTS

#### *Southern Whites:*

Mississippi .....	41.25
Kentucky .....	41.50
Arkansas .....	41.55

#### *Northern Negroes:*

New York .....	45.02
Illinois .....	47.35
Ohio .....	49.50

Negroes with better luck after they were born got higher scores than whites with less luck. The white race did badly where economic conditions were bad and schooling was not provided, and Negroes living under better conditions surpassed them. The differences did not arise because people were from the North or the South, or because they were white or black, but because of differences in income, education, cultural advantages, and other opportunities.

Scientists then studied gifted children. They found that children with top scores turn up among Negroes, Mexicans, and Orientals. Then they went to European countries to study the intelligence of children in homelands from which our immigrants come. Children from some of these countries got poor scores in America, but in their homeland children got good scores. Evidently the poor scores here were due to being uprooted, speaking a foreign language, and living in tenements; the children were not unintelligent *by heredity*.

The second superiority which a man claims when he says, "I was born a member of a superior race," is that his race has better *character*. The Nazis boast of their racial soul. But when they wanted to make a whole new generation into Nazis they didn't trust to "racial soul"; they made certain kinds of teaching compulsory in the schools, they broke up homes where the parents were anti-Nazi, they required boys to join certain Nazi youth organizations. By these means they got

## *Tradition and Social Change*

the kind of national character they wanted. But it was a planned and deliberately trained character, not an inborn "racial soul." In just the same way the Japanese have bred a generation of ruthless fighters. Fifty years ago Europeans who lived in Japan used to describe them as "butterflies flitting from flower to flower," incapable of "the stern drives" of Western civilization. Since 1900 the "butterflies" have fought six times overseas, and they are desperate and ruthless fighters. In a generation the butterflies have become gamecocks. But their *race* has not changed. The same blood still flows in their veins. But spiritually they are more like the Germans than they are like their racial brothers, the peace-loving Chinese.

It can go the other way too. In 1520 the ancient Mexicans were like the Germans. They talked like Nazis, thought like them, in many ways felt like them. They, too, believed war to be man's highest mission. They, too, trained their children for it, placing their boys in great state schools where they learned little else but the glories of battle and the rituals of their caste. They, too, believed themselves invincible, and against small, defenseless villages they were. But they were defeated in battle by the Spaniards with the help of the peoples whom the Aztecs had oppressed; their leaders were killed, their temples destroyed, their wealth pillaged, and their power broken. The Mexican peasant, who still speaks the Aztec language and in whose veins still runs the blood of Aztec conquerors, no longer dreams of glorious death in battle and eternal life in an Indian Valhalla. He no longer goes on the warpath, no longer provokes war with peaceful villages. He is a humble peon, wishing only to be left in peace to cultivate his little field, go to church, dance,

sing, and make love. These simple things endure.

Americans deny that the Nazis have produced a national character superior to that of Goethe's and Schiller's day, and that the ruthless Japanese of today are finer human beings than in those generations when they preferred to write poetry and paint pictures. Race prejudice is, after all, a determination to keep a people down, and it misuses the label "inferior" to justify unfairness and injustice. Race prejudice makes people ruthless; it invites violence. It is the opposite of "good character" as it is defined in the Christian religion—or in the Confucian religion, or in the Buddhist religion, or the Hindu religion, for that matter.

History proves that progress in civilization is not the monopoly of one race or subrace. When our white forebears in Europe were rude stone-age primitives, the civilizations of the Babylonians and the Egyptians had already flourished and been eclipsed. There were great Negro states in Africa when Europe was a sparsely settled forest. Negroes made iron tools and wove fine cloth for their clothing when fair-skinned Europeans wore skins and knew nothing of iron.

When Europe was just emerging from the Middle Ages, Marco Polo visited China and found there a great civilization, the like of which he had never imagined. Europe was a frontier country in those days compared with China.

Since the beginning of history an unusual collection of fortunate circumstances have been present among one race, sometimes among another. Up to now every great center of civilization has had its day and has given place to others. The proud rulers of yesterday become the simple

## *The Races of Mankind*

peasants of another era. The crude people who once threatened the great cities become later the kings and emperors in the same country. The peoples change, but the old arts of life are, for the most part, not permanently lost. They pass into the common heritage of mankind.

Inventions pass, too, from one continent to another when people trade with each other. This has happened since the dawn of history. About five thousand years ago, when Europe was on the frontiers of the civilized world, Asiatics came to trade in Europe and North Africa in great caravans. They followed the main rivers—the Nile into North Africa, the Danube into Europe, and the Tigris and Euphrates rivers out of Asia. People from all over came in contact with one another and compared notes on what they knew. In this way they pooled their knowledge, and out of this combined knowledge came the great inventions of civilization—massive building and the arts of metallurgy, chemistry, writing, medicine, and mathematics; transportation on wheels. The idea of printing and the use of movable type is an old Chinese invention, and our power engines depend upon a knowledge of explosives that the Chinese worked out with firecrackers.

When Columbus discovered America, corn, "Irish" potatoes, tobacco, and "Boston" beans were unknown in Europe. They had been developed by American Indians. Within ten years corn was being planted in Central Asia and in the interior of Africa, and African tribes today think that corn was given them by their own gods "in the beginning."

All races have made their contributions to human knowledge. Those who have lived at the crossroads of the world have invented most; those who have lived iso-

lated on islands or at the tip ends of continents have been content to earn their livelihoods by old traditional methods. There was, for them, no "necessity" to be "the mother of invention" after they had devised a way to live on the land.

Peoples who came into contact with strangers, however, gave what arts of life they had and took what the strangers had. These contributions to civilization accumulated over the centuries, and on this accumulation new discoveries are based. We are all the gainers.

The United States is the greatest crossroads of the world in all history. People have come here from every race and nation, and almost every race in the world is represented among our citizens. They have brought with them their own ways of cooking food, so that our "American" diet is indebted to a dozen peoples. Our turkey, corn, and cranberries come from the Indians. Our salads we borrowed from the French and Italians. Increasingly in recent years we have enriched our tables with soups from Russia, vegetables from Italy, appetizers from the Scandinavian countries, sea foods from the Mediterranean lands, chili and tortillas from Mexico, and so on almost endlessly. At the same time, everywhere we have gone in the world, we have popularized ice cream, beefsteak, breakfast cereals, corn on the cob, and other foods that are called "American."

Industry in the United States has taken the hand skills of our immigrants and made machines to do the work; without their skills we should not have known how. Our music, our buildings have developed from patterns brought to our shores or learned from every quarter of the world. Our country would be poorer in every phase of its culture if different



## *Tradition and Social Change*

cultures had not come together here, sharing and learning the special contributions each had to offer.

### *The Future of Race Prejudice*

Nevertheless there is race prejudice in America and in the world. Race prejudice isn't an old universal "instinct." It is hardly a hundred years old. Before that, people persecuted Jews because of their religion—not their "blood"; they enslaved Negroes because they were pagans—not for being black.

Looking back now, moderns are horrified at all the blood that was shed for centuries in religious conflicts. It is not our custom any more to torture and kill a man because he has a different religion. The twenty-first century may well look back on our generation and be just as horrified. If that century builds its way of life on the Atlantic Charter—for the whole world—our era will seem a nightmare from which they have awakened. They will think we were crazy. "Why should race prejudice have swept the Western world," they will say, "where no nation was anything but a mixture of all kinds of racial groups? Why did nations just at that moment begin talking about 'the racial purity' of their blood? Why did they talk of their wars as racial wars? Why did they make people suffer, not because they were criminals or double-crossers, but because they were Jews or Negroes or non-Nordic?"

We who are living in these troubled times can tell them why. Today weak nations are afraid of the strong nations; the poor are afraid of the rich; the rich are afraid they will lose their riches. People are afraid of one another's political or economic power, they are afraid of revenge for past injuries, they are afraid of social

rejection. Conflict grows fat on fear. And the slogans against "inferior races" lead us to pick on them as scapegoats. We pin on them the reason for all our fears.

Freedom from fear is the way to cure race prejudice. When aggressions like those of the Axis are made impossible by guarantees of collective security, those guarantees must cover countries of all races. Then Nazi race tactics will be outmoded. In any country every legal decision that upholds equal citizenship rights without regard to race or color, every labor decision that lessens the terror of being "laid off" and gives a man self-respect in his employment, every arrangement that secures the little farmer against losing his acres to the bank—all these and many more can free people from fear. They need not look for scapegoats.

The Russian nation has for a generation shown what can be done to outlaw race prejudice in a country with many kinds of people. They did not wait for people's minds to change. They made racial discrimination and persecution illegal. They welcomed and honored the different dress, different customs, different arts of the many tribes and countries that live as part of their nation. The more backward groups were given special aid to help them catch up with the more advanced. Each people was helped to develop its own cultural forms, its own written language, theater, music, dance, and so on. At the same time that each people was encouraged in its national self-development, the greatest possible interchange of customs was fostered, so that each group became more distinctively itself and at the same time more a part of the whole.

The Russians have welcomed cultural *differences* and they have refused to treat

## *The Races of Mankind*

them as *inferiorities*. No part of the Russian program has had greater success than their racial program.

In the United States a considerable number of organizations are working for democratic race equality. To mention only a few: The East-West Association has done some splendid work in emphasizing the importance of racial understanding, especially between Asiatic and Western peoples. The China Institute is active in promoting the work of Chinese students in America, and the Phelps-Stokes Foundation has brought many African students here, cementing the relation between the two continents.

The Council Against Intolerance in America has a continuous program in the schools. The Council on Intercultural Relations has done much to emphasize the Negro's contribution to American culture. The Bureau for Intercultural Education interprets the contributions made to America by many different races and nationalities. The Rosenwald Foundation has sponsored Southern Negro schools, elementary, high school, and college, in order to make up for the deficiencies of Southern Negro education. They have also pressed for Negro housing and health projects in the North. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People arranges publicity and fosters public education through periodicals, the radio, and special publications. It fights cases of discrimination in the courts and tries to get effective laws passed for the protection of Negro rights. The National Urban League helps Negroes who move from rural districts to the cities to find industrial work and proper living conditions.

Many church bodies have done much to help people realize that ideas of race su-

periority or inferiority are un-Christian. The Department of Race Relations of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America and the National Conference of Christians and Jews have encouraged collaboration among church leaders interested in interracial co-operation. During World War II the Executive Committee of the Council called on all local churches to eliminate racial discrimination in their own practices. Church bodies of all faiths have encouraged education for tolerance.

For some twenty years white and Negro leaders of the South have co-operated actively through the Commission on Interracial Co-operation in establishing local committees of both whites and Negroes. This commission has promoted mutual respect and understanding. In many local areas small groups have worked patiently to increase interracial co-operation.

Among the unions we find that the National Maritime Union has fought and won the right of Negroes to serve as skilled workers instead of in menial jobs only. Today mixed crews on freighters, tankers, and merchant ships are doing a magnificent job without friction. The *Booker T. Washington*, with its Negro captain, Hugh Mulzac, is a notable example. The United Auto Workers has an interracial committee with Walter Hardin, a veteran Negro official, as its chairman. At first white workers resisted the right of Negroes to do more skilled kinds of work. For example, when Negroes were first placed on machines previously manned by white operators, a work stoppage shut down a whole section of the Packard plant. R. J. Thomas, the president of the union, ordered the white strikers to return to work or suffer loss of union membership and employment. Within a few hours the strikers were back, with the recently

## *Tradition and Social Change*

promoted Negroes still at their machines.

Besides the National Maritime Union and the Auto Workers, a number of other unions have taken the lead in promoting interracial understanding. They include the International Ladies Garment Workers, the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, the United Electrical Radio and Machine Workers, the Marine Shipbuilding Workers, and the United Rubber Workers. In the Birmingham, Alabama, area there are more than a hundred union locals with both white and Negro members, and the Southern Tenant Farmers Union has a mixed membership.

From the time of Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation to the present day, the national and state governments have passed laws to carry forward the principles of our Declaration of Independence and our Constitution. In June 1941, President Roosevelt took direct action in his Executive Order No. 8802 toward eliminating discrimination in employment in plants with war contracts. The Fair Employment Practice Committee was set up and held public hearings in Los Angeles, Chicago, New York, and Birmingham. When an individual applied for a job in a plant doing war work and was refused for reasons of prejudice—because he was a Negro, a Jew, or a naturalized citizen—he could bring his case before the committee, who then called the company to a public hearing. This committee is now part of the War Manpower Commission.

The Negro Manpower Commission of this same body is headed by an able Negro economist and maintains a staff of Negro field representatives attached to the United States Employment Service. They also work through the regional offices of the Social Security Board to detect cases of racial discrimination.

The Bureau of Indian Affairs, under

Commissioner Collier, should be mentioned here as a government bureau with a long record of successful effort for the adjustment of a racial minority.

But at best the government can act only as a policeman, finding a wrongdoer here and there. Only the people themselves can really end racial discrimination, through understanding, sympathy, and public action. But there is evidence that the American people as individuals are beginning to think and to act. One hundred thousand Americans have petitioned the War Department to have at least one division in the Army containing both Negroes and whites. A separate petition was signed by American white men of draft age who asked to be assigned to such a division—many of these were Southerners.

In Houston, Texas, the mayor and a group of prominent citizens advertised in the local papers that no disturbance would be tolerated that would blacken the reputation of Houston when the Negroes of that city celebrated Juneteenth Day in honor of the emancipation of the slaves. It began with the statement, "Don't do Hitler's work," and warned citizens not to repeat rumors. The celebration was peacefully carried out. It is unfortunate that in Beaumont, Texas, similar effective action was not undertaken and a serious riot occurred.

In the most disastrous of recent riots in Detroit, a number of obscure bystanders performed heroic actions.

A white passenger on a streetcar spoke to the mob and dissuaded them from searching the car.

Two women, a mother and daughter, realizing that the Negro passenger was in danger, sheltered him so that when the rioters looked into the car he was effectively hidden.

In a bus going South recently the white

## *Our Changing Characteristics*

passengers all remained standing rather than occupy the "white" seats of a Jim Crow bus.

During the recent disturbances in New York's Harlem, a group of Negroes stood in front of the restaurant of a white proprietor who had been their friend and in this way protected it from being broken into and destroyed by the mob.

In the last analysis these homely incidents tell the real story. They tell us that the conscience of America is aroused, that there is work to be done, and that some of us are already trying to do it.

With America's great tradition of democracy, the United States should clean its own house and get ready for a better twenty-first century. Then it could stand unashamed before the Nazis and condemn, without confusion, their doctrines of a Master Race. Then it could put its hand to the building of the United Nations, sure of support from all the yellow and the black races where the war is being fought, sure that victory in this war will be in the name, not of one race or of another, but of the universal Human Race.

## OUR CHANGING CHARACTERISTICS

by JAMES TRUSLOW ADAMS

THERE ARE few things more difficult to generalize about without danger of valid objections than national character. The exceptions to any generalization at once begin to appear destructively numerous. A concept of a Frenchman must include not only such diverse types as the Gascon, the Parisian, and the Breton, but also the innumerable differences between individuals of these and other types in what is a rather small country which for long has been culturally and politically unified.

When we attempt the task in America it would seem to be hopeless. Who is an American? Is he the descendant of a Boston Brahman, of a Georgian cotton planter, or a newly arrived Armenian, Hungarian, or Italian? Is the typical American a clerk on the fifty-fourth story of a Wall Street office building or a farm hand of the machine age guiding in isolation a power plow along a furrow which stretches endlessly over the horizon? Is he a scientist working for pitiful pay and

the love of science in some government bureau in Washington, or a one hundred per cent go-getter in a Chamber of Commerce whose ideas of progress are limited to increase of wealth and population? Is he Hamilton or Jefferson, Lincoln or Harding, Roosevelt or Coolidge, Emerson or Barnum?

The task of defining national character in such a conflicting welter of opposites is dismaying enough, and yet a fairly clear notion is of prime importance for any number of very practical purposes. The modern business man doing business on a national scale, making mass appeal to our whole hundred and twenty millions at once; the statesman, domestic or foreign, trying to forecast the success or failure of an idea or a policy; the genuine patriot interested in the highest development of his civilization—these and others must all take account of that real if vague concept which we call the national character. It is from the third point of view

From James Truslow Adams, *The Tempo of Modern Life*, Albert & Charles Boni, Inc., 1931.

## *Tradition and Social Change*

that we are concerned with the topic in the present article.

There are many signs that our world is approaching a new and critical stage. Deeply embedded in the structure of the universe there is a power or force that is continually at work molding chaos into cosmos, formlessness into forms. These forms, or patterns, belong to the spiritual as well as to the physical plane of reality. A scale of values, an ethical system, a philosophy of life appear to be as "natural" and inevitable a part of the web and woof of that strange and inexplicable phantasmagoria that we call the universe as are crystals, corals, or living embodiments of the form-producing force in the plant or animal body.

For generations now we have been witnessing the gradual breakdown of old forms until we have reached the very nadir of formlessness in our whole spiritual life. But there are, as I have said, many indications that we are about to witness a new stage, the embryo stage of new forms.

For the most part this play of cosmic forces is independent of consciousness or will in individuals. The atoms know not and care not why or how they combine to make quartz crystals or a living cell of protoplasm. To a greater extent than we care to admit, perhaps, the higher forms—our scales of values, our philosophies—are also independent of conscious molding by ourselves. They are not wholly so, however, and if, as has recently been said, more and more of us here in America as elsewhere "are looking for a new set of controlling ideas capable of restoring value to human existence," it is evidence of the interplay between the blind form-making force of physical nature and the consciousness of man. What these ideas will be, will depend largely upon the soil in which

they will be rooted, the soil of our national character.

It is also clear that the form in which life, either physical or spiritual, is embodied is of transcendent importance for the individual. If living cells are arranged in the form of a bird, both the powers and limitations of the individual are wholly different from those of the individual when they are arranged in the form of a fish. Similarly in the spiritual world, powers and limitations depend largely upon the forms within which the spirit has its being. Because they are so largely intangible, we are likely to lose sight of the fact that these forms—scales of values, systems of thought, philosophies of life—all afford the spirit peculiar powers and impose peculiar limits.

What of the new forms? Arising from and in large part molded by the national character, are they likely to afford wider scope for man's highest aspirations, to enlarge the powers of the spirit, or to place limits and bind them closer to the earth? What of the national character itself?

Let us for the present discussion avoid the more difficult problem of a complete analysis and seek to establish a trend, often a simpler task, in the spiritual as in the physical world. Are our characteristics changing, and, if so, in what direction? Can we, in the first place, establish any definite points of reference which will be tangible and certain? I think we can.

Man expresses himself in his arts, and among these none is more illuminating than the earliest and most practical, that of architecture. It is one, moreover, in which we as Americans excel.

We need not greatly concern ourselves with the inchoate beginnings of our nationality in the first few generations of early settlement in the wilderness of the Atlantic seaboard. The physical tasks were

## Our Changing Characteristics

almost overwhelmingly hard and there was little opportunity for a distinctly American expression of either old or new spiritual life. By the time there was, we find that the spirit of the colonies had expressed itself in an architectural form, characteristic with minor variations throughout all of them.

When we speak of "colonial architecture," what at once comes to our mind is the home, the dwelling house of Georgian type, modeled on the English but with a delicacy and refinement surpassing most of the models overseas. From New England to the Far South these homes had outwardly a perfection of form and inwardly a proportion, a refinement of detail, a simplicity that all clearly sprang from the spirit of the time.

We may note quickly, in passing, several points in regard to them. The high point of the architecture was domestic. They were homes. They had an air of spaciousness, of dignity. They were aristocratic in the best sense. They were restrained and disciplined. Display or vulgarity were unthinkable in connection with them. They evidenced an ordered and stratified society. They held peace and rest. They were simple, unostentatious, and profoundly satisfying. They were shelters for a quiet life, alien from haste.

Let us, using the same architectural measure, pass from this first flowering of the American spirit to the very instant of today. The great contribution of twentieth century America to the art of building is the skyscraper, of which we may take the office building as both the earliest and most typical example. What are some of its usual characteristics?

The buildings are commercial, not domestic. Their very *raison d'être* is financial, the desire to get the most money

possible from a given plot of ground. Their bulk is huge but they are not spacious, save perhaps for their entrance halls in some instances. They are democratic in the physical sense of herding within their walls thousands of persons of every possible sort. In their primary insistence upon mere size and height regardless of every other element, they are undisciplined and unrestrained. Peace or rest is unthinkable within their walls with the incessant movement of thousands of hurrying individuals, and elevators moving at incredible speed.

They are lavish in their ostentation of expense on the ground floor, bare and unsatisfying above. A "front" of vulgar cost is built to hide the emptiness of the countless floors beyond the reach of the first casual glance from the street. Yet every small and growing community cries for them, and we hold them to the world as our characteristic achievement in art, as our most significant contribution in that most telltale of all arts, the housing of man's chief interest.

### II

Here, then, we have two points of reference tangible enough to be noted by all men, because they are physical in structure, yet full of spiritual implications for our task. When we turn to other means of establishing our trend, such as literature, newspapers, our methods of living, the wants we create and strive to satisfy, our social ways of contact, our national ideals as expressed in political campaigns and policies, and other means less obvious than the buildings in which we live or work or express our spiritual aspirations, what do we find? I think we find the same trends indicated above, amplified and emphasized.

## *Tradition and Social Change*

It is, if I may repeat myself to prevent misunderstanding, only with these trends and not with the whole complex national character that I am here concerned. As a historian, and with no wish to make a case but only to report what I find, certain trends in the past century appear to me to be clearly indicated. Let me note them just as from time to time I have jotted them down, without at first trying either to order or explain them.

These trends are the substitution of self-expression for self-discipline; of the concept of prosperity for that of liberty; of restlessness for rest; of spending for saving; of show for solidity; of desire for the new or novel in place of affection for the old and tried; of dependence for self-reliance; of gregariousness for solitude; of luxury for simplicity; of ostentation for restraint; of success for integrity; of national for local; of easy generosity for wise giving; of preferring impressions to thought, facts to ideas; of democracy for aristocracy; of the mediocre for the excellent.

For the most part I do not think any observer would quarrel with the validity of most of the above list. Discipline, self or other, has almost completely vanished from our life. In earlier days it was amply provided by school, family, and social life, by ideals and religious beliefs. Today it is not only absent in all these quarters but is preached against by psychologists and sociologists, decried by the new pedagogy, and even legislated against in school and prison.

Nothing is imposed any longer, from learning one's ABC's to honoring one's parents. Everything is elective, from college courses to marital fidelity. The man or woman who casts all discipline to the winds for the sake of transient gratifica-

tion of selfish desires, who denies obligations and duties, is no longer considered a libertine or a cad but merely a modernist pursuing the legitimate end of self-expression.

For a considerable time evidence has been accumulating that the national rallying cry has become an economic balance sheet. Perhaps one of the chief values of the whole prohibition muddle has been to serve as a mirror for the American soul. In the arguments advanced for and against, in the spiritual tone of the discussion, we can see all too well reflected the moving ideals of the American people, and the argument that carries most weight would clearly appear to be that of prosperity. Balanced against this, the questions of personal liberty, class legislation, or constitutional propriety are but as straw weighed against iron.

Prohibition is only one of the many mirrors that reflect the same truth. In innumerable cases of business practice and of legislation it has become evident that when personal freedom and initiative have to be balanced against the prosperity of the moment according to the business methods of the moment, prosperity wins. The one liberty that is still valued is the liberty to exploit and to acquire. That liberty will be defended to the death, but other liberties, such as freedom of thought and speech, have become pale and unreal ghosts, academic questions of no interest to the practical man.

Who cares in the slightest about the innumerable cases of encroachment on personal liberties on the part of both state and federal governments in the past ten years so long as business is good? Who cares about the methods employed by our police? Who is willing to give thought to the treatment frequently meted out to for-

## *Our Changing Characteristics*

eigners by our immigration officials—treatment that could hardly be surpassed by the old Russian régime at its worst, treatment that we could not stand a moment if accorded to *our* citizens by any foreign government? No, personal liberty as a rallying cry today receives no answer. But we will elect any man President who will promise us prosperity.

There is as little question of our growing restlessness. By rail, boat, automobile, or plane we are as restless as a swarm of gnats in a summer sunbeam. "We don't know where we're going but we're on our way" is the cry of all. Even the babies get their rest by traveling at forty miles an hour swung in cradles in Ford cars. That much of the movement is mere restlessness and does not spring from a desire to see and learn may easily be observed by watching the speed of our new tourists when they travel, and by listening to their comments when they have to stop to look at anything. As for the "nature" they claim to go to see, they are ruining our whole countryside with appalling indifference.

The home itself has yielded and has ceased to afford any sense of permanence and security. In the old days a home was expected to serve for generations. In the South, frequently property was entailed and the family was assured of a continuing center where it could cluster. A year ago, on October first, a hundred thousand families in New York City moved from one apartment to another, in many instances for no better reason than that they were bored with the one they had occupied a twelvemonth. Our multimillionaires build palaces, and in a few years abandon them to country clubs or office buildings.

As for thrift and saving, with the entire complex of spiritual satisfactions that go

with an assured future, they have not only notoriously been thrown overboard but are vigorously denounced by advertising experts like Bruce Barton and great industrial leaders like Henry Ford. "We should use, not save," the latter teaches the American people while they mortgage their homes, if they own them, to buy his cars. On every side we are being taught not to save but to borrow. The self-respect and satisfaction of the man of a generation ago who did not owe a penny in the world is being replaced by the social-respect and deep dissatisfaction of the man who has borrowed to the limit to live on the most expensive scale that hard cash and bank credit will allow.

With this has naturally come a preference for show to solidity. A witty and observing foreigner has said that Americans put all their goods in the shop window. In every vein the insidious poison is at work. A man who toiled and saved to own his home would see to it that it was well built and substantial. The man who expects to move every year cares for nothing more than that the roof will not fall until he gets out, provided the appearance is attractive. In an advertisement of houses for sale in a New York suburb recently one of the great advantages pointed out was that the roofs were guaranteed for three years.

The first thing that every business firm thinks of is show. Its office or shop must look as if there were unlimited resources behind it. Even a savings bank, whose real solidity should be seen in its list of investments and whose object is to encourage thrift, will squander hugely on marbles and bronze in its banking room to impress the depositor.

The same motive is at work in our intellectual life. One has only to glance at



## *Tradition and Social Change*

the advertisements of the classics, of language courses, of "five foot shelves" and note the motives that are appealed to for desiring culture. Nor are our schools and colleges exempt from the same poison. The insistence on degrees after a teacher's name, the regulating of wage scales in accordance with them, the insistence on a professor's publishing something which can be listed, are as much part of the same trend as is the clerk's wanting to be cultured so as to pass from a grilled window to an assistant-assistant executive's desk.

### III

We could expand the above examples almost indefinitely and continue through the remainder of the list. But it is all obvious enough to anyone who will observe with fresh eyes, and ponder. Both for those who may agree or disagree with me, let us pass to some of the other questions that arise in connection with the trends I have noted. Do they in any way hang together? Do they make a unified whole or are they self-contradictory and hence probably mistaken? Do they derive from any conditions in our history that would make them natural and probable, or are they opposed to those conditions? If they are real, do they represent a transient phase or a permanent alteration in our character?

As we study them carefully, it seems to me that they do hang together remarkably and ominously well. A person, for example, who is restless, rather than one who cares for rest and permanence, would naturally prefer the new to the old, the novel for the tried, impressions instead of difficult and sustained thought. Both these characteristics, again, naturally cohere with the desire for show rather than solidity, and for self-expression rather than self-discipline.

With these same qualities would go the love of gregariousness rather than solitude, of luxury rather than simplicity, and, easily belonging to the same type of character, we would find the desire to spend ousting the desire to save, and the substitution of prosperity for liberty and of success for integrity. With such a succession of substitutions, that of dependence for self-reliance is not only natural but inevitable, and so with the other items in the trend. They all fit into a psychological whole. There is no self-contradiction to be found among them.

But is there any connection to be found between them and our history? Are they qualities that might be found to have developed with more or less logical and psychological necessity from the conditions of American life which have separated the period of the colonial home from that of the seventy-story office building? I think here again we find confirmation rather than contradiction.

I have no intention to rival Mr. Coolidge by writing the history of America in five hundred words. All I can do in my limited space is to point to certain facts and influences.

Until well into the eighteenth century, there had been no very great change in the character of the American to mark him off from his English cousin. The wilderness and remoteness had, indeed, had some effect, but this was small compared with the later effects of what we have come to call "the West." Leaving out a few minor strains—such as the Dutch, Swedes, and the earlier Germans—the settlers were almost wholly British, who sought, in a somewhat freer atmosphere and with somewhat wider economic opportunity, to reproduce the life they had left.

The continent open to them was of lim-

## *Our Changing Characteristics*

ited extent. Beyond a comparatively narrow strip lay the long barrier of the Appalachians and the claims of the French. The strip itself contained no great natural resources to arouse cupidity or feverish activity. The character of the colonists had become a little more democratic, a little more pliant, a little more rebellious and self-reliant than that of their cousins of similar social ranks at home. That was all. They might differ with the majority of both Englishmen and Parliament over questions of politics and economics, but those were differences of interest and policy, not of character.

There lay ahead, however, the operation of two factors that were to prove of enormous influence—the exploitation of the American continent, and the immigration from Europe. We cannot here trace this influence step by step chronologically, but we must summarize it. “The West”—there were successively many of them—unlike the colonial America, was of almost limitless extent and wealth. There were whole empires of farm land and forest, mines that made fortunes for the lucky almost overnight, reservoirs of gas and oil that spawned cities and millionaires.

All did not happen in a day, but it did happen within what might almost be the span of one long life. In ages past an Oriental conqueror might sack the riches of a rival's state, a king of Spain might draw gold from a Peruvian hoard, but never before had such boundless opportunities for sudden wealth been opened to the fortunate among a whole population which could join in the race unhampered.

In the rush for opportunity, old ties and loyalties were broken. A restlessness entered the American blood that has remained in it ever since. In American legend, the frontier has become the Land of

Romance and we are bid to think of the pioneers as empire-builders. A very few may have dreamed of the future glory of America rather than of private gain, but it is well not to gild too much the plain truth, which is that in the vast majority of instances, the rush was for riches to be made as quickly as might be. In the killing of a million buffaloes a year, in the total destruction of forests without replanting, in the whole of the story in all its aspects there were few thoughts for a national destiny not linked with immediate personal gain at any expense to the nation. In this orgy of exploitation it is not difficult to discover the soil in which some of the elements of the changed trend in American character had its roots.

Another factor was also at work which combined with the above in its effects. The racial homogeneity of our earlier colonial days was broken by the millions of immigrants who came to us of racial stocks other than our own. Our first character had been that of seventeenth and eighteenth century Englishmen, not greatly altered until the Revolution. It was unified and stable, but the West and Europe both operated to undermine its stability.

On the one hand, the influence of the West, with the loosening of old bonds, its peculiar population, and its opportunities of limitless expansion and wealth greatly altered old ideals and standards of value. On the other, the steady infusion in large numbers of Germans, Irish, Swedes, Norwegians, Jews, Russians, Italians, Greeks, and other races also bore a conspicuous part in making the national character less uniform and stable. I am not concerned with their several contributions of value, but merely with the fact that the introduction of such foreign swarms tended to destroy a unified national character.

## *Tradition and Social Change*

By the latter part of the nineteenth century, two things had thus happened. In the first place, the real America had become the West, and its traits were becoming dominant. One of these was restlessness, not only a willingness but a desire to try any new place or thing and make a complete break with the old. Moreover, although the frontier may breed some fine qualities, it is a good deal like the farm in the respect that although it may be a fine place to come from, it is a soul-killing place in which to remain. It bred emotion rather than thought, and to a considerable extent substituted new material values for the spiritual ones of the older America.

In the rush for wealth—whether won from forests or mines; farms tilled, raped, and abandoned for fresher soil; real estate values from fast-growing cities; lands fraudulently obtained from a complaisant government—restraint, self-discipline, thought for the future ceased to be virtues. With all this came a vast optimism, a belief that everything would become bigger and better, and, because the standards of success were economic, better because bigger. Wealth was the goal, and the faster things got bigger—towns, cities, the piles of slain buffaloes, the area of forests destroyed—the quicker one's personal wealth accumulated. Statistics took on a new significance and spelled the letters of one's private fate.

At the same time, by the latter half of the nineteenth century another thing had happened, as we have said. Partly from the effects of the West and partly from immigration, the old, stable American-English character had become unstable, soft, pliant, something which could be easily molded by new influences. It could readily take the impress of an emotion, a

leader, a new invention. It was full of possibility, both of good and evil.

Suddenly this new, unformed, malleable national character, already warped to a large degree toward material values, was called upon to feel the full force of the influences flowing from the fruition of the industrial revolution. Invention followed invention with startling rapidity. Life itself became infinitely more mobile. Scientists, engineers, manufacturers threw at the public contrivance after contrivance of the most far-reaching influence upon man's personal and social life without a thought of what that influence might be beyond the profit of the moment to the individual manufacturer.

Choice became bewildering in its complexity. The national character had become unstable. It was in a real sense unformed and immature, far more so than it had been a century earlier. It had also lost belief in the necessity of restraint and discipline. It had accepted material standards and ideals. It was in far more danger of being overwhelmed by the ideals of a new, raw, and crude machine age than was perhaps any other nation of the civilized group.

With an ingenuity that would have been fiendish had it not been so unthinking and ignorant, the leaders of the new era used every resource of modern psychology to warp the unformed character of the people, to provide the greatest possible profit to the individuals and corporations that made and purveyed the new "goods." Our best and worst qualities, our love of wife and children, our national pride, our self-respect, our snobbery, our fear of social opinion, our neglect of the future, our lack of self-restraint and discipline, our love of mere physical comfort have all been played upon to make mush

## *Our Changing Characteristics*

of our characters in order that big business might thrive. Even our national government, whether wittingly or not, undertook to inflame our American love of gambling and our desire to "get rich quick" regardless of effect on character.

### IV

Taking all the molding influences of the past century and more into account, it is little wonder, perhaps, that our national characteristics exhibit the trend noted. The situation, serious as it is, might be less so had it occurred at a time when the spiritual forms in the world at large—its scales of values, its ethical systems, its philosophies of life—were intact. But as we have noted, they have been largely destroyed; and at the very time when new forms are in process of arising, largely to be molded by the national characters of the peoples among whom they arise, our own is in the state pictured above. The question whether our new characteristics are temporary or permanent thus becomes of acute significance.

"Race" is a word of such vague and undefined content as to be of slight help to us, but if we take the whole history of the Western nations from which we derive, I think we may say that the characteristics noted above may be classed as acquired and not inherited. Biologists consider such not to be permanent and heritable, though the analogy with biology again is so vague as to afford little comfort.

More hopeful, I think, is the fact that these new characteristics appear to have derived directly from circumstances, and that these circumstances themselves have been in large part such as have passed and will not recur again. Immigration and

"the West" have ceased to be continuing factors in our development. Their effects remain and must be dealt with, but neither factor will continue to intensify them. The tides of immigration have been shut off. There is significance in the fact that "the Wests" which won under Jefferson, Jackson, and Lincoln were defeated in 1896 under Bryan.

"The West" of today is a new West in which conditions, and to a large extent ideals, are different. Yet its greatest contribution to our national life and character remains that broadening and deepening of the dream of a better and a richer life for all of every class which was the cause of its earlier victories and which goes far to redeem its less noble influences. The nation as a whole is entering upon a new era in which all the conditions will be different from any experienced heretofore. Territory, resources, opportunities are none of them any longer unexploited and boundless. What the future may hold, we cannot tell, but in fundamental influences it will be different from the past. The menacing factor that remains is that of mass production and the machine.

Also, we have spoken thus far only of the trend in characteristics, not of our character as a whole. In that there are certain noble traits which remain unaltered, or have matured and strengthened. It is possible, now the warping influences of the past century have to some extent disappeared, that the national character may develop around them as a core, that we shall forget in manhood the wild oats sown in our youth.

But age acquires no value save through thought and discipline. If we cannot reinstate those, we are in danger of hampering rather than aiding in that reconstruction of the spiritual life of man that is the in-

## *Tradition and Social Change*

evitable and most vital task now before the nations. We must either forward or retard it. We are too great to live aloof. We could not if we would, and upon the trend of our character depends to a great extent the future of the world.

Nor let us forget that although fortune has poured her favors in our lap, there is a Nemesis that dogs the steps of all, and

we cannot lightly scorn the growing enmity of half the world. Are we to treat the machine age and mass production only as a new and different "West," or are we at last, in growing up, to learn wisdom and restraint? Are we going to change the trend in our character, or is it to become fixed in its present form, a danger to ourselves and a menace to mankind?

## THE TECHNOLOGICAL IMPERATIVE

*by* STUART CHASE

SUPPOSE that the thirteen million people living in the United States in 1830 had awakened on the morning of January 1, 1831, with forty times the physical energy they had gone to bed with the night before. An active picture meets the mind's eye, a very active picture. A lumberman can fell forty times as many trees in a week, a housewife sweep forty times as many square feet of floor; porters can transport forty times their accustomed load; weavers ply their shuttles forty times as fast—if the shuttles can brook the strain; and children raise forty times their normal rumpus.

Assuming no increase in the invention of labor-saving devices—and where would be the point with such an exuberance of labor available—what might we logically expect in the way of economic changes in a culture essentially handicraft? From an Economy of Scarcity, with barely enough to go round, the young Republic would almost immediately enter an Econ-

omy of Abundance. The food supply could be increased—not forty-fold, due to the lack of tools and cleared land, but perhaps five-fold—in a remarkably short time; whereas to double it would probably provide a plethora for all. Every family could have a fine house, filled with fine handmade Colonial furniture; every man could have a fine coat, one for every day in the week; and every woman a chest of linen as big as a box stall.<sup>1</sup>

The new energy would get through to everybody. It would flower at once into goods for the ultimate consumer. Hours of labor could be cut to two or three a day, and still the citizens would have to take to climbing mountains or organizing expeditions to the unknown West, or playing the most strenuous games, or writing long epic poems, or painting miles of murals like Diego Rivera, or even dispensing with work animals, to spend their surplus vitality.

Today, in the United States, we have

From *The Economy of Abundance* by Stuart Chase. By permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers.

<sup>1</sup> 1830 was not a pure handicraft society. Prime movers were just coming in, but their frailty is demonstrated by the historic thirteen-mile race on August 25, 1830, in Baltimore, between Tom Thumb, the first locomotive built in the country, and a horse and carriage. The horse won.

## *The Technological Imperative*

precisely this equivalent of energy per capita.<sup>2</sup> It is not in our muscles, but in our delivered power resources, in actual coal, oil, and natural gas burned, and water turbines turned. This energy is given, and has been used; every foot-pound of it. Yet the average standard of living, while including more commodities and services than that of 1830, is still below the margin of health and decency; millions are acutely undernourished, miserably housed, deplorably clothed, while economic insecurity clutches at almost every heart. The furnaces roar, the turbines whirl, the compression chambers stiffen to the shock of the explosion, but life is a more uncertain business than it was a century ago, and that happiness which Mr. Jefferson bade us pursue is as remote as when he wrote the Declaration of Independence.

Something is wrong here, something very wrong indeed. Even if we assume that the costs of long-distance hauling, the mining of coal and oil, the supplying of great cities, the construction of the industrial plant, and other necessary outlays for high-energy civilizations account for as much as seventy-five per cent of all new energy delivered, a forty-fold increase in energy should result in a ten-fold increase in living standards. But the actual increase in material well-being of 1930 over 1830 was probably not more than two-fold. Riding through North Carolina not long ago, I saw a bright blue motor car, resplendent with chromium fittings, in the yard of a dilapidated shack constructed of rough logs and plastered with red mud. The car

and the hut belonged to the same share cropper. It struck me as a not unreasonable summary of the net gain in living standards since 1830.

The immense new powers have not flowered in useful consumers' goods but have run to immense new wastes. Our very junk piles would have ransomed a king in the Middle Ages, with their stores of metal and findings. The State of New York undoubtedly contains more fabricated "wealth" than did all Europe in 1400 A.D.; but, for all its due capitalization, it is not wealth in terms of human use and enjoyment. It is largely misplaced energy crystallized in stone and steel. The United States was a poor country in 1830, and is a poor country today, in terms of the human calculus. The Economy of Abundance is here, right enough, but like a wastrel's legacy, it has done us little good.

### II

Why, with such a magnificent increase in the technological apparatus, have the tangible results been so meager? Primarily because the technological apparatus has not been built with human well-being in mind. It has been built not to make goods but to make money.

In the Economy of Scarcity goods were dear, money was dear, labor—in the United States—was dear; population pressed against the food supply. In the Economy of Abundance the food supply, for the first time in human history, presses against population. Surplus becomes a more acute problem than dearth. A finan-

<sup>2</sup> According to Professor A. B. Lamb of Harvard, the maximum potential energy of high-handicraft cultures, including manpower, work animals, windmills, water wheels, etc., is about 4,000 kilogram calories per capita per day. This is our 1830 base. In 1929, the energy in coal, oil, natural gas, and water power actually consumed was 156,000 kilogram calories per capita per day. Adding the original 4,000, we get a total of 160,000, which is forty times greater than in 1830.

## *Tradition and Social Change*

cial system which worked well enough in scarcity conditions, when local communities were largely self-supporting, and which worked moderately well in the expanding markets of the nineteenth century, is unable to cope with Abundance in its maturer phases. The financial system is rooted in conditions of relative scarcity. How else shall price levels be maintained, and all the vested interests which have clustered upon those prices be validated? Abundance is a savage threat to the price levels of the manufacturer, to the worker's wage level, to the farmer's crop prices, to the banker's interest rates. As it advances it drives prices, wages, farm incomes, interest rates, toward an ultimate zero.

"Industry is carried on," says Veblen, "for the sake of business, and not conversely; and the progress and activity of industry are conditioned by the presumptive chance of business profits. . . . Serviceability, industrial advisability is not the decisive point. The decisive point is business expediency and business pressure. . . . The vital factor is the vendibility of the output, its convertibility into money values, not its serviceability for the needs of mankind." The present surplus, fostered by energy and technology, is relentlessly undermining vendibility. Athwart this threat have been thrown monopolies, the pyramiding of prices through waste, restrictions on abundant credit and purchasing power—barriers and dams of every conceivable variety. But the curve of invention is a geometric one, as William F. Ogburn has shown, and will not be gainsaid.

The great industrial and agricultural plant has been placed in one frame of reference: that of business, finance, and salability. What is it worth in dollars?

It was "worth" perhaps four hundred billions in 1929 and two hundred billions today, which is obvious nonsense, you say; for the land has not sunk into the sea, the shelves are still piled with goods, and the machines are more powerful than ever. Wait, my friend! You are changing the frame of reference from vendibility to serviceability. In terms of dollars—and dollars are the counters in the financial game the citizens play—the United States, after four years of depression, is a jewel in a pawn shop, worth fifty cents on the dollar.

An inventor comes to you with a new aluminum alloy, talking behind his hand. He produces samples, diagrams, cost figures. You ask to see the patent papers. They are in order. The thing looks good, remarkably good. Who else knows about it? Nobody knows about it. Not a word to a soul. Old Johnson would give his eye teeth to get in on this. Not a word to him. But there are Jackson and Josephson, good men both, and with money. Jackson has the ear of the First National, moreover. Good. Now for a lawyer. We must move quietly, quickly, and safely.

So you put up your money, and Jackson and Josephson put up theirs, and the First National puts up its money—on a first mortgage. Contracts are executed, ground is broken, a factory is built. It is built in your town because you live in the town; or it is built in the next town because "labor conditions are better," which means that laborers are willing to work longer hours for less pay. (The whole distinction I seek to make lies in this phrase. "Better" labor conditions from the point of view of vendibility mean poorer labor conditions from the point of view of serviceability.) You are not building that factory to give your neighbors higher standards of living. The idea never crosses

## *The Technological Imperative*

your mind—until possibly your advertising agent suggests that a "service appeal" might increase sales. You and Jackson and Josephson and the First National are building that factory to make money. But technicians design it and operate it. When it is built it is duly locked into the specialized network of a high-energy culture.

This little story illustrates how all the factories and all the railroads and all the power developments and all the commercial buildings in America have, in effect, been built. Only the government and a few charitable foundations have done some building with standards of human service predominant. To them we might add those who build their own homes and clear their own acres without benefit of contractors. The contractor's main business of course is to make not houses but money. He will contract to build a skyscraper on the top of Mount McKinley, or an opera house on the Dry Tortugas, if there is money in it. Witness what he did in Florida in the days of her front-foot glory. The energy and materials thrown away in a few years were probably sufficient to maintain the population of Florida in opulence for a generation. Living standards were not the idea; money was the idea, and waste was the result.

Considering the history of the American plant, and the motive of its construction, one is perhaps surprised that it is capable of reaching even the meager standard it does. Left entirely to enterprisers it could hardly have reached its present level. Fortunately, enterprisers have not had the entire direction. Engineers must be consulted when railroads are built and profitable inventions exploited. Engineers must deal in the terms of energy and the laws of physics. A century-long struggle has re-

sulted between the money-making wishes of business and the orderly conceptions of engineers. Utter confusion has thus been held in check to a degree, and the plant constructed with at least a left-handed regard for orderly considerations. It had to be, or it would fall down. The struggle has been present, but concealed behind a mounting expansion rate. Now expansion becomes more leisurely as the plant is built, and the struggle bursts stormily into the open. Technology with its mandate of abundance and finance with its vested interest in scarcity are locked in mortal combat. One or the other will not leave the arena alive.

### III

The Economy of Abundance is not a mystical force, not a genie from a bottle, despite the fact that its pressures catch us unaware. It is:

A group of buildings, mines, farms, vibrant with machines, and connected by lines of energy and transportation; founded upon

A series of scientific laws, proliferating into specific processes and inventions, and

A set of human habits.

The latter may be further divided into the habits of the scientists and technicians who control and develop the physical processes, and the habits of laymen, connoting everybody else living within the high-energy orbit.

The technicians, including many thousands of mechanics without formal engineering training, carry on by a concept of cause and effect which makes them intolerant of the rule of thumb, traditional craftsmanship, and common sense. Where the layman holds that a motor car can obviously go faster with a sharp snout to cleave the air, the technician takes an



## *Tradition and Social Change*

elfish delight in finding that a blunt nose and a sharp tail better fit the laws covering the passage of bodies through resisting mediums. No such perversity to common conceptions has ever been witnessed before, no such fidelity to mathematical equations, no such certainty as to what can happen and what cannot.

The "laws" of finance, which gave impetus to the erection of the Empire State Building, collapsed before the steel work was in place; the laws of physics will hold the structure itself foursquare and sturdy until the steel disintegrates. Banks fail but bank buildings do not. The technician has a duty, a discipline, an intellectual integrity, and a certainty which set him in a class apart.

Day by day the habits of the laity have shifted to conform to the technological pattern. These mass habits now form perhaps the strongest of all mandates imposed by the Economy of Abundance. The individual may protest that he abhors the machine, that the old days were happier, that science is a false messiah, that he is in the market for a patch of arable ground—but his acts belie the protestation. He must constantly watch clocks, consult timetables, ride on railroad trains and in subways, thrust a forefinger in telephone dials, send telegrams; dodge if not use motor cars and busses; be hoisted in elevators, turn the cocks of water and gas faucets, twiddle with radio knobs, switch on electric lights, trust implicitly to the complicated equations back of suspension bridges.

• More important still are the habits of work to which he must submit. While he is theoretically free to choose any job which takes his fancy, all jobs everywhere are one small portion of a gigantic process which begins and ends beyond his pur-

view. In a sense, we are all men on the belt, screwing one nut home. For most of us the important feature of our work is the figure on a piece of paper delivered Saturday night. We have perforce accepted specialization, resigned ourselves to work which is frustrating to a greater or less degree because we cannot see the end, and turned en masse to the payroll check and its promise of consumption, to right the balance. It is difficult to overemphasize the importance of this pattern. An irresistible demand is banking up for dependable payroll checks and the chance to live with some ease of mind. As the mass realizes that the age of scarcity has passed, and there is no technological reason for insecurity, this demand may be expected to take a battering, smashing political form.

Another group of mass habits, allied to the above, is that which centers round wants. Quantity production has accustomed us to certain articles and services. Even the very poor have not remained untouched. Electric lights, water supply, motor cars, talking pictures, silk or rayon stockings, frequent baths, toothbrushes, oranges the year round, tinned goods, bottled goods, rubber-soled shoes—hundreds of things are now solidly rooted in use and wont. Most of us should be miserable amid the stagecoaches of 1830. The compulsion is strong and belligerent to hold the line.

High-energy habits have grown up, a forest, row on row, ever since the industrial revolution began. First came the great complex orienting itself about the factory, including wage work, time serving, union organization. Then the railroad habits moved in, to grip especially a nation of long distances like the United States. From the '60's on, normal little boys confused

## *The Technological Imperative*

locomotive engineers with God; lonely pioneers listened for the whistle of Number Six as she went thundering down the canyon every night at eight o'clock; the railroad station became the town meeting place when the morning mail pulled in; a rich folk lore was laid down, and

I've been workin' on the railroad  
All the livelong day

became almost a national anthem. Soon morning and evening commuters' trains became a more cardinal part of the life of Suburbia than its churches.

On the Mississippi, the Missouri, and the Ohio the flatbottomed, paddle-wheeled steamboat inaugurated a culture complex celebrated by Mark Twain: his very pseudonym a technical phrase in that culture.<sup>8</sup>

Bicycle habits came and went in the lives of most of us now over forty; but the motor car provided a group which bids fair to be permanent, even if we must exchange gasoline for alcohol engines. *Recent Social Trends* notes 150 specific influences of the automobile on social life—from undermining railroad traffic to changing the habits of a courtship. Literally millions of families have so organized their lives round the motor car that, deprived of it, they would be at a loss to get to their jobs, to transport children to school, to take vacations, to shop, to procure essential supplies, to carry on social life at all. Without a car many would have to move their residence. When income fails, the automobile is not the first thing to go; it is almost the last. Americans will cut down on food before they will sacrifice gasoline.

Radio behavior is now a strong grove of branching habits. Here again, *Recent*

*Social Trends* lists one hundred and fifty specific influences. Plumbing habits, electric power habits, telephone habits are also dominant and expanding. The airplane complex is already rooted and will presently proliferate. "If the selected inventions were analyzed as was done in the case of the radio, rayon, and the X-ray, the result would be a very impressive picture of the tremendous force of inventions in producing social changes. . . . The hundreds of thousands of smaller inventions all have their effects on social change, many of them slight, but immeasurable in their total influence."

Once the organic growth of technological change in human habit is grasped in all its immensity, it becomes obviously unthinkable to tear these behavior patterns out of the social fabric without a more serious revolution than that implicit in uprooting traditional attitudes toward vendible property, money, or the state. Abundance habits are a pattern based on physical realities, not on concepts more or less metaphysical. With strong inertia, with stubbornness, if necessary, with ferocity, the mass of men may be expected to cling to that pattern. Its total shape they have never known or cared to analyze, but insidiously it bends all their waking hours.

### IV

Over and against the abundance complex is another complex, also strong, also belligerent, inherited from an earlier age: the cultural lag of scarcity. Most pervasive of all are the money and credit habits of an economic system founded on vendibility. This loose tangle of behavior sets

<sup>8</sup> "Mark twain" was a measurement of the depth of the river water called from lineman to pilot.

## Tradition and Social Change

buyer against seller, creditor against debtor, landlord against tenant, taxpayer against government, employer against wage earner, individual against society and, most pitiful of all, personal integrity against financial success. The pattern assumes a fixed quantity of wealth. It assumes that the less there is for you the more there is for me. The facts of Abundance belie this assumption. Under a free flow of energy, the more there is for you the more there is for me. Observe, I am not talking about the beautiful ideals of a co-operative society; *I am pointing out the brute fact that energy has forced us into a collective mold.*

The lesson of collective interest has already been learned in respect to disease. "This solidarity against pathogenic micro-organisms," says J. B. S. Haldane, "extends beyond the boundaries of nationality, race, or even species. Every Rumanian infected with infantile paralysis, every Indian with smallpox, every rat with plague, diminishes the probable length of my life." Presently we shall realize that every slum, every destitute family, every nervous breakdown due to unemployment, diminishes the probable enjoyment of wealth and comfort by all other members of the community.

Yet vendibility operates *as if* there were no collective mold, *as if* technological facts did not exist. When Abundance destroys actual scarcity in goods, money, property, or labor, it is a traditional money habit which necessitates the creation of artificial scarcities through monopoly and waste. Bankers, money lenders, manufacturers, mine operators, and labor leaders proceed to act *as if* their several commodities were really dear.

The conception of the right to consume as depending upon work is a scarcity sur-

vival, born of a time when man, not energy, performed the labor. Property habits, carried over from a time when all property was for use, are becoming fantastically unreal and quite unworkable in a mass production setting. The legal title remains, but function has been stripped away. The strong habits of pecuniary thrift, saving, and profitable investment operate to clog the financial mechanism when technology has built the plant to a certain level of performance.

Political habits are also survivals of an agrarian culture. We vote; but technological problems are never decided by voting, while governmental problems are increasingly technical. In consequence they are decided ineptly or not at all. Megalopolis is not governed in any adequate sense of the word. Were it not for a few hard-working engineers the city would disintegrate.

One might proceed indefinitely developing the extent and implication of the habits surviving from the days of stagecoaches. Every citizen possesses an assortment. At one moment he is driving his car to work—an abundance habit; arrived at his desk, he proceeds to conference with his advertising agency as to ways and means to give scarcity value to the cigarette he manufactures—a stagecoach habit.

An impasse has been reached. The two sets of habits will no longer work in tandem. One or the other has to give way. As I write the struggle is ferocious. The stagecoach gentlemen are organizing for "sound" money—meaning, of course, scarce money; for a return to the gold standard; for less government in business; for judicial protection—especially by the Supreme Court—against federal control of hours, wages, and competitive conditions. With their direction of high-speed presses

## *The Technological Imperative*

and broadcasting stations, they can fortify stagecoach vestiges in millions of humbler citizens. The battle, observe, is not so much between a class of citizens  $x$  and a class of citizens  $y$ , as between  $x$  and  $y$  impulses in the same citizen. Simultaneously he may feel that his wage in an age of plenty is abominably low and that the gold standard must be preserved. Yet the fact remains that his buying power cannot be raised so long as a gold standard limits mass buying power.

The cultural laggards are noisy; but tangible events since the impasse was reached show net gains for dynamo behavior and losses for stagecoach behavior; not only in the United States, but all over the world. Vendibility is definitely in retreat. Nation after nation has left the gold standard, to embark on managed currency policies in which the bankers correctly find no hope for maintaining a private monopoly of credit. The State has been forced to support millions of citizens without requiring the traditional *quid pro quo* of work, because there was no work for them to do. Autarchy has all but destroyed the world free market. Dictatorships, one after another, supersede voting, parliaments, checks, and balances. Centralization and government control of industry proceed at a violent pace. The end no man can foresee, but the general direction is clear enough. All industrial nations are in the turmoil of a transition period, seeking more or less blindly for stabilities which accord with technological imperatives. History is at one of its most momentous passages.

In the United States Mr. Hoover threw billions of government dollars under tottering banks, railroads, and insurance com-

panies, all without avail, and with a curious mixture of motives. He sought to preserve economic individualism by two billion dollars' worth of socialism. Mr. Roosevelt has been moved—or perhaps forced—to a direct attack upon the institutions of vendibility. His policies have obscured party lines by giving jobs to technicians rather than to deserving Democrats; they have overridden traditional political behavior. Power has flowed out of the States to the federal government in a tidal wave. The National Recovery Administration, the Agricultural Adjustment Administration, Public Works Administration, Civil Works Administration, Civilian Conservation Corps, Tennessee Valley Authority, Alcohol Administration, railroad co-ordination policies, and the rest are one and all insults to stagecoach institutions.

v

The case of Germany is particularly instructive.<sup>4</sup> Modern German industry, since its origin in the days of Bismarck, has never been subjected to the extremes of free competition found in England and the United States. It has been closer to the technological ideal of unification, standardization, co-ordination, and government control. Its scientific research has been the despair of other countries. After the disaster of the War Germany turned to rationalization with unparalleled eagerness—to intensified research, integration, standardization. As a result a magnificent ground work was laid down, superior, as a system, to that found in any other industrial nation. But when the depression of 1930 smote the world Germany suffered more severely than most. Why? *Because*

<sup>4</sup> Following Robert A. Brady: *The Rationalization Movement in German Industry*.

## Tradition and Social Change

*rationalization had gone only to a certain point*; the final and inevitable step had not been taken. She had specialized superbly and intelligently in this industry and that, but she had failed to co-ordinate the whole machine. No dependable controls were set up to keep the power industry articulated with the chemical industry, articulated with agriculture, and the rest. As a result the several highly specialized cartels and trusts were harder hit than would have been the case had rationalization never been undertaken.

The program was daring, but it was not daring enough. Again why? Because there was no steady aim; because it was inaugurated for profit, then was forced to accept serviceability to a degree as integration proceeded, and so wavered back and forth between the two principles. Now science was ahead, now finance capital. For what was Germany rationalizing; why the magnificent research laboratories, bureaus of standards, co-ordinating committees? Nobody knew; at least everybody had a different answer. It was to increase the incomes of absentee owners; to better the condition of the German people; to undersell competitors in world markets; to pay reparations; to glorify the spirit of science; to compensate for the inferiority suffered in 1919; for what you will.

Germany had no clear definition of aims and purposes, but she went on rationalizing industry just the same, until she finally got in so deep that she could not turn back. The only possible direction now is forward, to complete integration at home, followed by industrial integration with her neighbors—for she is far from a self-sustaining economic unit. Thus German capitalists, looking for enlarged earnings, have put their necks into technology's

noose, and it is hanging them—as capitalists. Meanwhile the people of Germany depend precariously on the functioning of a half-completed industrial machine. Upon the surface of these stern realities a gentleman by the name of Hitler seems to be waving his arms, shouting stagecoach oratory, and dancing strange Aryan dances. Back, back from technics, before it is too late! cries Spengler. *It is already too late for Germany.*

What is true of Germany is true of every modern community, to the extent of its industrialization. The United States comes close behind, with England following next in line. France is well down the list, for her hostages to specialization have not been quite so pronounced. Her thrifty peasants have resisted abundance habits to a degree—but not enough to save them from the nemesis which dogs us all. Forward, the hound commands, and forward the peoples of the West must go.

### VI

Assuming that the abundance pattern will prevail, what are the terms upon which it will function? Obviously in the mêlée of transition it can function only by fits and starts. Perhaps it is possible concretely to specify the terms. An abundance economy demands:

1. Capacity operation of its plant, on the balanced load principle.

2. An unhampered flow of goods to consumers, involving the right to a minimum standard of living, regardless of work performed—if *no work is available*. Distribution must replace exchange. This imperative is practical, not idealistic, arising from the necessity of keeping the plant in operation.

## *The Technological Imperative*

3. The elimination of waste, restriction, and monopoly, as methods of maintaining prices.

4. The conservation of natural resources to the degree which, consistent with existing technical knowledge, will maintain adequate supplies of raw materials for the calculable future. Neglect of this imperative may cripple the whole productive mechanism through the failure of one resource—say copper or oil.

5. The employment of a decreasing number of man hours in direct production.

6. The encouragement of research, new invention, and a fairly high obsolescence rate for plant and processes. No more suppressed inventions; no corporate patent monopolies.

7. The production of capital goods to grow only as technological improvement, mass purchasing power, or mass demand requires it. No reliance on this sector, as heretofore, as an automatic distributor of purchasing power.

8. A one-to-one relationship between the growth of physical production and the growth of debt. In the long run, no debt can be serviced which compounds faster than physical production. This rule operates to disallow the bulk of capital claims now outstanding in the United States and in many other nations.

9. A sharp distinction between use property and industrial fixed assets. The latter must be socially controlled in that the units are no longer independent enterprises, but interlock one with another.

10. Economic decentralization; the end of Megalopolis, because it is too wasteful a unit to support. The liquidation of the distinction between city man and country man.

11. The industrialization of most agricultural staples, on a quantity production basis, and a declining number of man hours in farming.

12. Shorter working hours for all.

13. A wide extension of social services and public works to absorb those inevitably to be displaced from industry, agriculture, and the parasitic trades.

14. The continuation of industrial specialization—though decentralization may be expected to simplify it somewhat. The final form in the calculable future seems to be one flexible, farflung electrical machine.

15. No narrow economic nationalism. The plant demands essential raw materials on a reasonable exchange basis from all over the world.

16. Revised and simplified political forms. The scrapping of outworn political boundaries and of constitutional checks, and balances where the issues involved are technical.

17. Centralization of government; the overhead planning and control of economic activity. In North America such planning to satisfy technology should be continental rather than national. In Europe technology will not tolerate national boundaries indefinitely. A working dictatorship over industry is indicated if the plant is to be efficiently operated. Technical performance cannot be subject to popular vote, but the administrative group from time to time might well be. Remember that pecuniary graft has no point with more than enough to go round; but the very human lust for power remains unimpaired.

18. Finally, and exceedingly important, Abundance demands no compromise. It will not operate at half speed. It will not

## Tradition and Social Change

allow retreat to an earlier level and stabilization there. Pharaoh did not tell the Nile what to do; the Nile told Pharaoh what to do. The industrial discipline must be accepted—all of it—or it must be renounced. The only retreat is back one hundred and fifty years to the Economy of Scarcity.

Such, substantially, are the terms upon which the Economy of Abundance will function; such the mold to which new social habits, new institutions must conform. This is the way, and I think the only way, that a high-energy culture will function in the long run. Some of the imperatives may be subject to modification in detail; other imperatives may arise; but the basic mold is set. This is the direction in which Mr. Roosevelt is now being forced. Underneath political smokescreens, and the alarms of stagecoach champions, those of us who have eyes to see can detect the glacier advancing into Sweden, Germany, England, Italy, South America, Canada, Australasia. In Russia the march is luminous.

Do these terms violate human nature; are they inconsistent with normal behavior? Already many have been incorporated into our daily lives, as we have seen. What they do violate is a set of institutions largely developed in the eighteenth century, which in turn displaced an earlier culture complex based on feudalism, which in turn displaced its predecessor, and so on back to Mesopotamia. Men talk as though the gold standard had been laid down by God, side by side with the

law of gravitation. The universal gold standard is not so old as Mr. Roosevelt.

It is not to be gainsaid that these terms carry implications of substantial moral shock to many persons, especially to large owners of property hitherto vendible. The terms are now being bitterly fought, and will continue to be for years to come. Habit complexes do not change overnight. If it requires at least a decade to modify the psychology of stolid Russian peasants, it may require twice as long to modify the psychology of Wall Street.

Technological imperative is impersonal, amoral, and non-ethical. Like the Nile, it sets the boundaries within which a given culture must operate. The terms imposed by the steam engine were onerous to the point of often violating human nature; the terms of the electric motor and the photoelectric cell are more generous. *Fortunate and perhaps fortuitous is the fact that the modern imperative is straight in the direction of an economic system based on serviceability and security.* Machines do not care whom they serve, but they refuse to operate without a high volume of output; they care nothing about human leisure, but the laws of their spinning are inconsistent with the clumsy interference of the human hand. The wastes and barriers of vendibility they will not tolerate.

Any conscious plan for the new society, any revision of the structure of government, any program for social control, any valid political movement, must square with these imperatives. This is the bed we have made—it matters not how—and we must lie on it.

## A CONSERVATIVE SPEAKS

by GEORGE E. SOKOLSKY

I SPEAK as a conservative. In my youth I ran the gamut of revolutionary movements. Anarchist, pacifist, I.W.W. sympathizer, I have sought this path and that to a better, a more commodious life, not only for myself, but for all men.

In Russia, I witnessed the mass struggle of millions. I saw them try to move from pre-capitalism to Communism at one step. In China, I lived through the agonizing torture of man as he sought to free himself from the barbarities of feudalism—glamorous and luxurious for those on top, retching misery for those at the bottom. In Europe, I felt the pangs of instability and insecurity.

Therefore I speak as a Conservative. Let no man think of me as a Tory, as a Bourbon, as a heartless marauder in a predatory world. For I have nothing to defend—not even chains to lose. Like so many who have written for a living, I have nothing of the goods of this world but what I earn and consume today. And I can earn that and consume that no matter which cause I favor, for such is the way of my work.

Therefore I plead no personal cause. My tax bill will be not much higher or lower whichever way we go. The household servants I employ will be as few one way as the other and their loss would not seriously affect my personal life. All the property I own is an old farm which can sustain me on a low but comfortable standard of living one way or the other. Not a single personal interest—that is, not a single materialist consideration—moves me to hold or express my opinion.

If my current views associate me with similarly minded individuals who may be capitalists, manufacturers, merchants, other views would associate me with equally if not more interesting individuals. And if there is a monetary reward for defending my point of view I have long known that colleagues who defend other and opposite points of views are as well or even better paid. My income-tax statement, I am sure, cannot compare with that of such an opponent of Conservatism as Mr. Heywood Broun.

I go into these personalities to clear the decks. I want to say what I have to say without any consideration of praise or disdain. I want to project some ideas without having my presentation suffer from that personal equation which is whatever I am.

### I

In terms of goods, poverty has been most general in non-capitalistic countries. For the immediate objective of capitalism is that standards of living shall ever be on the rise. More particularly, capitalism seeks that the purchasing capacity of a constantly increasing number of purchasers shall ever be on the rise.

Mass production, modern merchandising, advertising, the creation of new commodities, the popularization of old ones, have but one objective—namely, increased usage, increased consumption. And in pursuance of this single objective it has become altogether clear, beyond the barest shadow of a doubt, that not the expensiveness of a commodity but its cheapness

Georgé E. Sokolsky, "A Conservative Speaks," *The Atlantic Monthly* (August, 1936). By permission of the author and *The Atlantic Monthly*.



## *Tradition and Social Change*

makes it of greater value to its producer. The less it costs to buy an article, the more readily that article comes within the purchasing power of an increasingly large number of people.

The classical example is the motorcar. Ford makes more money selling \$500 cars than anyone makes selling \$10,000 cars. This is so obvious that anybody understands the rule who understands anything at all. But we need not limit ourselves to motorcars.

Oranges were once luxuries. Beef was a luxury and very expensive—that is to say, even hamburger was beyond the daily purchasing power of workers. Students of food consumption note the popular shift from a large consumption of starchy foods, such as oatmeal, white bread, and potatoes, to protein foods, like beef, eggs, and green vegetables. It is the cheapening of the price of the latter, in ratio to wages earned, that has increased the number of those to whom they are available.

Take such an item as fruit—always a great luxury to city dwellers. Fruit in many forms, as juices, cocktails, or salads, in tins and jars, fresh and preserved, for the table or at a soda fountain, has been made available to millions who in my childhood knew only sour apples and black bananas.

Women's clothes indicate most remarkably the workings of this theory. For today a woman can purchase within any price range better styles, more durable cloths, sturdier dyes, and more alluring patterns for very much less money than ever before. The mechanization of textile production, introduction of rayon and acetates, competitive improvements in undergarments, stimulation of the use of cosmetics, deodorants, hair removers, nail beautifiers, soaps and creams and what-not, have served to give to the working

woman the "tone" which formerly belonged only to those who regarded themselves as ultra-exclusive.

In every human activity, every walk of life, this rule is constantly in evidence. To repeat the rule: in the capitalist system the objective of production is to bring prices down so that more people come within the price range of a commodity.

This, then, is the only economic system in which it is possible to give practical application to the moral dictum of the greatest good for the greatest number without utilizing political disturbance as a means to that end. In this alone, if in nothing else, capitalism justifies itself.

It is evident from this statement of the situation that in capitalistic production it is essential for wealth, in the sense of purchasing power, to be widely diffused. Thus, contrary to Marxian theory, in the United States the ownership of wealth is more widely diffused than in any other country on earth.

Opponents of the capitalist system suffer a confusion between actual ownership of wealth and control of the agencies of production and distribution. For instance, it may be said for the sake of argument that control of the management of the United States Steel Corporation rests with J. P. Morgan and Company. But it is evident that the ownership of the wealth produced by this corporation is divided between about 200,000 investors and 200,000 employees. Both groups, up to 1929, found that the amount of wealth which they took out of this corporation steadily increased, and the indications are that, except as exorbitant taxes may intervene, the investor and the employee will continue to draw increasingly from this wealth-creating and wealth-diffusing agency.

In a country where more than one hundred billion dollars is invested in homes

## *A Conservative Speaks*

and farms, where one hundred and twenty billion dollars is in savings bank deposits and insurance policies, where the curve of wages is—over a period, say, of half a century—steadily moving upwards, it is evident that the diffusion of wealth is constant. No greater proof of that need be adduced than the volume of business done by chain and department stores even in a year like 1933—usually referred to as a depression year. The volume of business amounted to \$25,037,225,000 or \$208.64 for every man, woman, and child in the country. Such trade is impossible unless the diffusion of wealth is widespread.

Here, however, we face a difficulty. In this constant shift of population from one economic bracket to another, a residue of unshiftable people appears. These marginal human beings lag behind, and their economic status is often pitiful. In the rural regions they are termed hillbillies and share-croppers, and in the cities they dwell in slums.

The capitalist system has within itself no adequate solution for the welfare of these marginal peoples. They often represent a psychological as well as an economic deficiency. Frequently they are hostages to a changing mechanization of production. Sometimes they represent a geographical shift of an economic center with which they could not catch up, as, for instance, when a greater use is found for oil than for bituminous coal and miners get stuck in a profitless coal region.

These unfortunates often contrast with another and numerically smaller marginal group, the excessively rich. In the United States this group consists of a few individuals, principally women who inherit wealth which they themselves do not employ with any social usefulness. Their personal conduct is often so distressing as to bring shame upon the original producers

of the wealth. For instance, the investment of a huge inherited fortune in tax-exempt government bonds is an outrageous withdrawal of wealth from productivity.

Both these groups bear unfortunate witness to the imperfections of the capitalist system. But numerically the two groups are small as compared with the total population which benefits from widespread diffusion of wealth and the enlarged availability of an increasing number of desirable commodities. The marginal poor should become the object of state aid, that they might be educated, trained, or re-oriented to fit into the wage and price scales current for the whole population. The marginal rich should be taxed equably so that their wealth might be made available for productivity. For dead wealth—and nontaxable government bonds are dead wealth—serves no one beneficially.

Three specific characteristics mark the operations of the capitalist system at its best:—

(1) A higher return to the investor than he can receive from economic passivity, as when he invests in government bonds for security only.

(2) Wages so scientifically just that the purchasing power of the worker constantly increases.

(3) An adequate return to the farmer so that manufactured goods and the benefits of urban living are more generally available to him.

These three characteristics are normal in the United States.

## II

The relationship between democracy and capitalism is not an inherent one, but this is a self-evident truth: democracy continues to flourish in countries where capi-

## *Tradition and Social Change*

talism is most developed; it declines and disappears in those countries where the capitalist system is underdeveloped or does not exist.

The capitalist system is most perfectly developed in the United States, Great Britain, France, the Scandinavian countries, Holland, Switzerland, and Czechoslovakia. These are, in exact parallel, the most democratic countries in the world. (I could include certain South American parallels which would bear out the conclusion.) France, where the capitalist system has been forced to undergo the test of the war, inflation, depression, and the fear of future wars, witnesses at the moment a simultaneous attack on both capitalism and democracy.

In Communist, Fascist, and pre-capitalist countries, democracy does not exist. In such a land as Japan, where there is a confusion between capitalism and feudalism, there is also a confusion between democracy and military plutocracy. China differs from India only in this, that, whereas in India democracy does not even appear, in China its development is abortive because of the shift from an emerging capitalism to new projections of colonization on China's soil.

We return, then, to the phenomenon of the simultaneous growth and recession of capitalism and democracy in specific areas.

To those for whom political liberty as enunciated, for instance, in the Constitution of the United States has no significance, the preservation of democracy is futile. But the current view of the world forces the overwhelming conviction that for the individual man there can be no will, no personality, no character, almost no value in life, unless he enjoys that liberty.

It may be true, as opponents of capitalism will argue, that man cannot live by money incentive alone, and that in both Communist and Fascist countries men serve the state for no reward save the moral satisfactions which come from social service. That may or may not be true. Soviet Russia's admission of the theory of differentiated wages, Stakhanovism, the use of technical experts rather than ideologically correct party workers in management, and other evidences force the conclusion that Russia's experience is much the same as ours—namely, that men work best when their rewards include a greater purchasing power than their neighbors achieve with less notable work. In a word, in both countries it is not only a case of living up to the Joneses, but also of getting more than the Joneses.

If, then, social consciousness does not provide ample stimulation for productivity, why should the individual sacrifice his liberties for a cause which in the end brings him back to capitalism, under which he could enjoy his liberties? What motive should impel me lightly to trade away my rights under the Constitution of the United States?

It is at this point that the individual must choose for himself between a tried human experience and an asserted philosophic idealism. Admitting certain specific weaknesses and imperfections in the capitalist system, I yet retain political and social liberties under democratic institutions which are invaluable to me as a human being. If I sacrifice those liberties, will mankind be rid of the weaknesses and imperfections of our economic order? Do I envisage such results in Soviet Russia, Germany, Italy, Japan? Why should I assume that potentially their systems will re-

## *A Conservative Speaks*

store human liberty when it is evident that the very persistence of these systems depends upon the destruction of human liberty? Stalin may authorize his people to smile or to use cosmetics, but there can be no liberty unless we can do either or neither without his interference.

Democracy, even in the well developed capitalist countries, is beginning to suffer from the expanding power of government. The Chief Justice of England, Lord Hewart of Bury, wrote a remarkable treatise, *The New Despotism*, against such expansion. We limit it here through the Supreme Court. Only in the United States is specific provision made in the organic law and in the machinery of government to limit the expanding power of government. Yet, when we analyze the provisions in our Constitution, we discover that many of them which in operation safeguard human personal rights were originally designed to safeguard property rights. In the American system, human rights and property rights are identical in theory and practice.

The interrelation between liberty and capitalism causes one to pause before any major revision of the capitalist system; for we have to measure the value of each reform by its possible effect upon democratic government and upon human liberty.

The question poses itself in this manner. Human beings can learn to live under any form of government. The Germans have lived under the semi-democracy of the Kaiser and under the sclerotic despotism of Hitler. The Russians built a subway in Moscow without utilizing the financial or engineering mechanism of capitalism. In China, during a twenty-year period of political and social revolution, when no

one economic system applied to the entire country, remarkable progress was made in banking, manufacturing, communications, and every field of economic endeavor.

What, then, makes one system superior to another? Two factors, I think. One is the rising standard of living, the greater availability of useful and pleasant commodities and services; the other is human liberty.

Liberty is no God-given benefit to man. No Moses, no Solon, handed it down. Every evidence of human liberty is the product of an endless, vigilant struggle between the individual man and government. Whether it is trial by jury or freedom of the press, or the right to a writ of habeas corpus, each manifestation of liberty marks a successful struggle—and each right can be destroyed unless man is willing to struggle to maintain his rights to liberty.

Shall I, then, not judge the value of an economic system by its relationship to human liberty? And shall I not accept the evidence of history and the experience of the race? When I shall see the human liberty in Soviet Russia, in Italy, in Germany, in China, that I see in the United States and Great Britain, then, and only then, shall I feel justified in revising my view of the value of the capitalist system. Until then I am morally bound to conserve capitalism because I seek to conserve democracy.

III

The capitalist system is by no means perfect. It is an evolving, changing, flexible process of production and distribution. Like every dynamic human experience, it contains within itself the germs of its own destruction, and against the

## *Tradition and Social Change*

spread of these germs we who seek to conserve the benefits of the system must be eternally vigilant. These evils may be summarized as follows:—

(1) The principal weakness of capitalism is a tendency to monopoly. Large-scale production, the control of capital by banking groups, government price-fixing as under the NRA, control of operations during wars, the nationalistic stabilization of essential industries, are but a few of the causes which may result in monopoly.

There are instances when monopolies represent the most efficient and socially beneficial structure for the production and distribution of goods, and these instances are often cited to prove a rule.

The error, however, lies in this: the capitalistic-democratic system can only maintain itself by the elimination of decadent energy and the generation of new, vital energy. Thus, in the more highly developed capitalistic countries, new initiative, new capacity, comes to the top in every change from one commodity type to another. For instance, no wagon-trust monopoly could prevent the rise of the automobile; no ice trust could destroy electrical refrigeration; no theatrical trust could impede radio; no banking group interested in cereals could limit the consumption of citrous fruits.

Monopolies tend to rigidities in the production of goods: take what we give you, for there is nothing else. Competition forces ingenuity and inventiveness to curry the favor of the consumer. Without competition the capitalistic system breaks down in its every phase. Nevertheless, those that have achieved the top seek to hold it, and will permit themselves the momentary luxury of seeking to do business by monopolistic rather than by com-

petitive processes. It is a short-sighted error. Sooner or later a brilliant competitor will rise to destroy the monopoly. This has been American economic history in all but two or three fields.

(2) The tendency to bureaucracy is not only evident in government, but in business as well. After the initial pioneering group has disappeared from an enterprise the organization tends to become stabilized into a more or less self-perpetuating bureaucracy in which seniority rather than capacity marks men off for advancement. In prosperous times such a tendency can do little harm, but during a depression or a competitive fight an enterprise may be utterly destroyed by a bureaucracy. And, unfortunately, psychological factors, nepotism, social relationships, often strengthen a bureaucratic group in its strangle hold upon an industry.

In the capitalist system there is no room for uncompetitive overhead, and that is what a bureaucracy represents. It destroys itself by the evidence of the balance sheet, and there comes a time when the most perfectly conceived alibis for unthinking management cease to be acceptable. The bureaucracy under capitalism is an error.

(3) Excessive wealth often defeats itself in Caligulan exhibitionism. Really the evil is limited to the individual. In fact his excesses, in economics, act as a means for a swifter redistribution of wealth.

Nevertheless, the picture of a grandson of a great pioneer with five or six concubines or the granddaughter of a great pioneer in quest of Sybaritic excitation, in contrast with that of the other marginal people, those who have nothing, those who perhaps never can have anything because they are residual tail-enders in a fierce struggle—these contrasting pictures ever before us stir such pity, such an emotional antag-

## *A Conservative Speaks*

onism to all wealth, to all ownership of property, that an entirely false conception of the capitalist system replaces experience and knowledge.

In England the social system of royalty intervenes to save society from its fools. In the United States no such social mechanism is possible. Education, the church, breeding, have failed to safeguard society against the psychopathic rich. They are one of the major liabilities of our way of life, and a means must be found to curb them.

(4) Capitalism and democracy both recognize the individual as the center of power; under Communism and Fascism the center of power is the state. The individual in these systems possesses only such rights and powers as the state permits him to enjoy; under our system the state has only such powers as we delegate to it. Under these other systems the state can at its will completely destroy any individual or any class or group of individuals; under our system, at an election we can throw out of office all who control the state.

Herein lies the essential difference in point of view between our system and theirs. Under both Communism and Fascism, class distinctions are inevitable, whereas we seek to avoid class distinctions altogether.

As beneficial as this is to the individual in a democratic state, it has this essential weakness, that when an attack is made upon the capitalist system there are no capitalists to defend it, and when an attack is made on democracy there are no democrats to defend it. That sounds like a rhetorical inexactitude, but when we look at current literature, at current lecturing, even at the current drama, the emphasis is all in opposition and the defensive forces are weak. Even the so-called

free press, even the great capitalistic monthlies, publish vicious, unjustified, and badly conceived attacks on the very system which keeps them alive.

Why is this? Is there no conserving force in the country? Where are the conservatives to state their case? The answer is that they are producing and distributing goods and services. The men they hire to advertise their wares are specialists in the science of merchandising and are not designed by training to defend economic and social systems. That is why so many of the notable leaders in industry and banking appear so feeble in public life.

In England, men are trained for both business and public life. But we are only one generation from pioneering and our strong men are not philosophers. Nor do they think in terms of defending anything, because they are still building, still creating their world. It is not their function to study the whys and wherefores of their system. Theirs it is to create, produce, and distribute commodities, to arrange services, and to improve the purchasing power of their customers.

Yet the picture presents this weakness, that the non-producers are always flaw pickers. They can easily discover what is wrong with a system because they have nothing to do with its operations. The producers, on the other hand, have no time and less inclination to defend themselves. They are only capable of pouting against the injustice of an unappreciative world.

### IV

Facing these situations, it is clear that capitalism and democracy in the United States must at the present stage fight a corrosive attack upon themselves, not by philosophic defense or by supine apologies,

## *Tradition and Social Change*

but by specific steps which are not to be remedies for some momentary distress or allurements designed to win an election. The objective should be the improvement of the capitalist system and the conserving of democracy.

First comes the whole problem of employment. In the United States unemployment and re-employment during the depression and the recovery have been considered politically. Both have become political weapons for the destruction and retention of political power.

The fact that no one in the United States knows how many unemployed there are as compared with the unemployed in 1929 is not only astonishing, but a self-evident criticism of government. Billions of dollars are available for all sorts of useful and useless projects, but not a cent for an employment census, scientifically conducted. Not a single figure used by anyone on the subject of employment or unemployment has any validity whatsoever. All are guesses—and it is clear from the variety of evidence that all the guesses are quite distant from the facts.

An employment census is the most essential economic step which can be taken in the United States today.

Yet certain facts are clear even without supporting figures. We know that a large number of people are unemployed. We do not know whether it is necessary for them to be permanently pauperized either by unemployment or by government relief. We must assume, however, that under the capitalist system there can be no general prosperity if a large part of the population is without consuming power earned by its own activity.

Herein lies a danger not only to capitalism but to democracy, because when human beings depend upon the state for

their livelihood they are likely to become enslaved politically to those who at the moment control the state. It is not a question of their corruption by a vicious political machine; they would be corrupted by an angelic political machine.

Secondly, in the United States we face the specific task of restoring orderly processes of democratic government. These processes have become disorganized and confused by the depression and the assumption of emergency permissive powers. The American democratic scheme depends for its successful operation upon a strict adherence to the doctrine of limited powers and authority. Ultimate power must remain vested in the people, and this is possible only when all legislation and government authority are controlled by the limitations upon authority in the Constitution. Deviations from the essential structure, without orderly change, can only increase confusion and distress.

Thirdly, we have set up a form of relief to care for our marginal population. No matter how much this relief costs in money, it is justified by humane considerations. But it is now necessary to revalue the processes, for it is evident that relief has been so handled that a section of the population is being permanently pauperized and therefore being forced into a morally degraded condition. The problem is so to reorganize relief activities that they become focused on their own elimination. This can only be accomplished, except in certain specific instances, by making it possible for private enterprise to absorb an increasing number of employees.

Fourthly, restrictions placed upon economic activity, particularly state-imposed rigidities and exorbitant taxation, prevent private industry from expanding sufficiently to re-employ the total number of

## *On Natural Aristocracy*

unemployed. These restrictions should be removed as rapidly as possible.

Finally, capitalism depends for its advance upon the stimulation and expansion of markets. In the United States this is always possible if prices are brought down so that increasingly numerous brackets of the population find that their purchasing power is available for greater consumption. Such stimulation and expansion must

be left to the ingenuity and inventiveness of private enterprise and to the competitive process.

In a word, fundamentally our task, in conserving capitalism and democracy, is to restore freedom of action to the individual and to depend upon competition to achieve our main objective, which is to have our standard of living ever higher for a greater number of people.

## ON NATURAL ARISTOCRACY

*by* THOMAS JEFFERSON

MONTICELLO, *October 28, 1813.*

[*To John Adams*]

... I agree with you that there is a natural aristocracy among men. The grounds of this are virtue and talents. Formerly, bodily powers gave place among the aristoi. But since the invention of gunpowder has armed the weak as well as the strong with missile death, bodily strength, like beauty, good humor, politeness and other accomplishments, has become but an auxiliary ground for distinction. There is also an artificial aristocracy, founded on wealth and birth, without either virtue or talents; for with these it would belong to the first class. The natural aristocracy I consider as the most precious gift of nature, for the instruction, the trusts, and government of society. And indeed, it would have been inconsistent in creation to have formed man for the social state, and not to have provided virtue and wisdom enough to manage the concerns of the society. May we not even say, that that form of government is the best, which provides the most effectually for a pure selection of these natural aristoi into

the offices of government? The artificial aristocracy is a mischievous ingredient in government, and provision should be made to prevent its ascendancy. On the question, what is the best provision, you and I differ; but we differ as rational friends, using the free exercise of our own reason, and mutually indulging its errors. You think it best to put the pseudo-aristoi into a separate chamber of legislation, where they may be hindered from doing mischief by their co-ordinate branches, and where, also, they may be a protection to wealth against the Agrarian and plundering enterprises of the majority of the people. I think that to give them power in order to prevent them from doing mischief, is arming them for it, and increasing instead of remedying the evil. For if the co-ordinate branches can arrest their action, so may they that of the co-ordinates. Mischief may be done negatively as well as positively. Of this, a cabal in the Senate of the United States has furnished many proofs. Nor do I believe them necessary to protect the wealthy; because enough of these will find their way into every branch of the legislation, to protect



## *Tradition and Social Change*

themselves. From fifteen to twenty legislatures of our own, in action for thirty years past, have proved that no fears of an equalization of property are to be apprehended from them. I think the best remedy is exactly that provided by all our constitutions, to leave to the citizens the free election and separation of the aristoi from the pseudo-aristoi, of the wheat from the chaff. In general they will elect the really good and wise. In some instances, wealth may corrupt, and birth blind them; but not in sufficient degree to endanger the society.

It is probable that our difference of opinion may, in some measure, be produced by a difference of character in those among whom we live. From what I have seen of Massachusetts and Connecticut myself, and still more from what I have heard, and the character given of the former by yourself, who know them so much better, there seems to be in those two States a traditionary reverence for certain families, which has rendered the offices of the government nearly hereditary in those families. I presume that from an early period of your history, members of those families happening to possess virtue and talents, have honestly exercised them for the good of the people, and by their services have endeared their names to them. In coupling Connecticut with you, I mean it politically only, not morally. For having made the Bible the common law of their land, they seemed to have modeled their morality on the story of Jacob and Laban. But although this hereditary succession to office with you, may, in some degree, be founded in real family merit, yet in a much higher degree, it has proceeded from your strict alliance of Church and State. These families are canonized in the eyes of the people on common principles, "you tickle me,

and I will tickle you." In Virginia we have nothing of this. Our clergy, before the revolution, having been secured against rivalry by fixed salaries, did not give themselves the trouble of acquiring influence over the people. Of wealth, there were great accumulations in particular families, handed down from generation to generation, under the English law of entails. But the only object of ambition for the wealthy was a seat in the King's Council. All their court then was paid to the crown and its creatures; and they Philipised in all collisions between the King and the people. Hence they were unpopular; and that unpopularity continues attached to their names. A Randolph, a Carter, or a Burwell must have great personal superiority over a common competitor to be elected by the people even at this day. At the first session of our legislature after the Declaration of Independence, we passed a law abolishing entails. And this was followed by one abolishing the privilege of primogeniture, and dividing the lands of intestates equally among all their children, or other representatives. These laws, drawn by myself, laid the ax to the foot of pseudo-aristocracy. And had another which I prepared been adopted by the legislature, our work would have been complete. It was a bill for the more general diffusion of learning. This proposed to divide every county into wards of five or six miles square, like your townships; to establish in each ward a free school for reading, writing and common arithmetic; to provide for the annual selection of the best subjects from these schools, who might receive, at the public expense, a higher degree of education at a district school; and from these district schools to select a certain number of the most promising subjects, to be completed at an Uni-

## On Natural Aristocracy

versity, where all the useful sciences should be taught. Worth and genius would thus have been sought out from every condition of life, and completely prepared by education for defeating the competition of wealth and birth for public trusts. My proposition had, for a further object, to impart to these wards those portions of self-government for which they are best qualified, by confiding to them the care of their poor, their roads, police, elections, the nomination of jurors, administration of justice in small cases, elementary exercises of militia; in short, to have made them little republics, with a warden at the head of each, for all those concerns which, being under their eye, they would better manage than the larger republics of the county or State. A general call of ward meetings by their wardens on the same day through the State, would at any time produce the genuine sense of the people on any required point, and would enable the State to act in mass, as your people have so often done, and with so much effect by their town meetings. The law for religious freedom, which made a part of this system, having put down the aristocracy of the clergy, and restored to the citizen the freedom of the mind, and those of entails and descents nurturing an equality of condition among them, this on education would have raised the mass of the people to the high ground of moral respectability necessary to their own safety, and to orderly government; and would have completed the great object of qualifying them to select the veritable aristoi, for the trusts of government, to the exclusion of the pseudalists; and the same Theognis who has furnished the epigraphs of your two letters, assures us that "Ουδεμιαν πω, Κυρν', αγαθοι πολιν ωλεσαν ανδρες." [Not any state, Curnus,

have good men yet destroyed.] Although this law has not yet been acted on but in a small and inefficient degree, it is still considered as before the legislature, with other bills of the revised code, not yet taken up, and I have great hope that some patriotic spirit will, at a favorable moment, call it up, and make it the key-stone of the arch of our government.

With respect to aristocracy, we should further consider, that before the establishment of the American States, nothing was known to history but the man of the old world, crowded within limits either small or overcharged, and steeped in the vices which that situation generates. A government adapted to such men would be one thing; but a very different one, that for the man of these States. Here everyone may have land to labor for himself, if he chooses; or, preferring the exercise of any other industry, may exact for it such compensation as not only to afford a comfortable subsistence, but wherewith to provide for a cessation from labor in old age. Everyone, by his property, or by his satisfactory situation, is interested in the support of law and order. And such men may safely and advantageously reserve to themselves a wholesome control over their public affairs, and a degree of freedom, which, in the hands of the *canaille* of the cities of Europe, would be instantly perverted to the demolition and destruction of everything public and private. The history of the last twenty-five years of France, and of the last forty years in America, nay of its last two hundred years, proves the truth of both parts of this observation.

But even in Europe a change has sensibly taken place in the mind of man. Science had liberated the ideas of those who read and reflect, and the American example had kindled feelings of right in the

## Tradition and Social Change

people. An insurrection has consequently begun, of science, talents, and courage, against rank and birth, which have fallen into contempt. It has failed in its first effort, because the mobs of the cities, the instrument used for its accomplishment, debased by ignorance, poverty and vice, could not be restrained to rational action. But the world will recover from the panic of this first catastrophe. Science is progressive, and talents and enterprise on the alert. Resort may be had to the people of the country, a more governable power from their principles and subordination; and rank, and birth, and tinsel-aristocracy will finally shrink into insignificance, even there. This, however, we have no right to meddle with. It suffices for us, if the moral and physical condition of our own citizens qualifies them to select the able and good for the direction of their government, with a recurrence of elections at such short periods as will enable them to displace an unfaithful servant, before the mischief he meditates may be irremediable.

I have thus stated my opinion on a point on which we differ, not with a view to controversy, for we are both too old to change opinions which are the result of a long life of inquiry and reflection; but on the suggestions of a former letter of yours, that we ought not to die before we have

explained ourselves to each other. We acted in perfect harmony, through a long and perilous contest for our liberty and independence. A constitution has been acquired, which, though neither of us thinks perfect, yet both consider as competent to render our fellow citizens the happiest and the securest on whom the sun has ever shone. If we do not think exactly alike as to its imperfections, it matters little to our country, which, after devoting to it long lives of disinterested labor, we have delivered over to our successors in life, who will be able to take care of it and of themselves.

Of the pamphlet on aristocracy which has been sent to you, or who may be its author, I have heard nothing but through your letter. If the person you suspect, it may be known from the quaint, mystical, and hyperbolical ideas, involved in affected, new-fangled and pedantic terms which stamp his writings. Whatever it be, I hope your quiet is not to be affected at this day by the rudeness or intemperance of scribblers; but that you may continue in tranquillity to live and to rejoice in the prosperity of our country, until it shall be your own wish to take your seat among the aristoi who have gone before you. Ever and affectionately yours.

## LETTER TO A CORRESPONDENT IN AMERICA

by THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY

SIR: The four volumes of the *Colonial History of New York* reached me safely. I assure you that I shall value them highly. They contain much to interest an English as well as an American reader. Pray, ac-

cept my thanks, and convey them to the Regents of the University.

You are surprised to learn that I have not a high opinion of Mr. Jefferson, and I am surprised at your surprise. I am cer-

## *Letter to a Correspondent in America*

tain that I never wrote a line, and that I never in Parliament, in conversation or even on the hustings—a place where it is the fashion to court the populace—uttered a word indicating an opinion that the supreme authority in a State ought to be entrusted to the majority of citizens, in other words, to the poorest and most ignorant part of society. I have long been convinced that institutions purely democratic must, sooner or later, destroy liberty or civilization, or both.

In Europe, where the population is dense, the effect of such institutions would be almost instantaneous. What happened lately in France is an example. In 1848 a pure democracy was established there. During a short time there was reason to expect a general spoliation, a national bankruptcy, a new partition of the soil, a maximum of prices, a ruinous load of taxation laid on the rich for the purpose of supporting the poor in idleness. Such a system would, in twenty years, have made France as poor and barbarous as the France of the Carolingians. Happily, the danger was averted; and now there is a despotism, a silent tribune, an enslaved press. Liberty is gone, but civilization has been saved.

I have not the smallest doubt that, if we had a purely democratic government here, the effect would be the same. Either the poor would plunder the rich and civilization would perish, or order and property would be saved by a strong military government, and liberty would perish. You may think that your country enjoys an exemption from these evils. I will frankly own to you that I am of a very different opinion. Your fate I believe to be certain, though it is deferred by a physical cause. As long as you have a boundless extent of

fertile and unoccupied land, your laboring population will be far more at ease than the laboring population of the old world, and, while that is the case, the Jeffersonian polity may continue to exist without causing any fatal calamity. But the time will come when New England will be as thickly populated as Old England. Wages will be as low, and will fluctuate as much with you as with us. You will have your Manchesters and Birminghams, and in those Manchesters and Birminghams hundreds of thousands of artisans will assuredly be sometimes out of work. Then your institutions will be fairly brought to the test. Distress everywhere makes the laborer mutinous and discontented, and inclines him to listen with eagerness to agitators who tell him that it is a monstrous iniquity that one man should have a million while another cannot get a full meal.

In bad years there is plenty of grumbling here, and sometimes a little rioting. But it matters little, for here the sufferers are not the rulers. The supreme power is in the hands of a class, numerous indeed, but select; of an educated class; of a class which is, and knows itself to be, deeply interested in the security of property and maintenance of order. Accordingly, the malcontents are firmly yet gently restrained. The bad time is got over without robbing the wealthy to relieve the indigent. The springs of national prosperity soon begin to flow again; work is plentiful, wages rise, and all is tranquillity and cheerfulness. I have seen England pass three or four times through such critical seasons as I have described.

Through such seasons, the United States will have to pass in the course of the next century, if not of this. How will you pass through them? I heartily wish you a good

## *Tradition and Social Change*

deliverance. But my reason and my wishes are at war, and I cannot help foreboding the worst. It is quite plain that your government will never be able to restrain a distressed and discontented majority. For with you the majority is the government, and has the rich, who are always a minority, absolutely at its mercy.

The day will come when, in the State of New York, a multitude of people, none of whom has had more than half a breakfast, or expects to have more than half a dinner, will choose a Legislature. Is it possible to doubt what sort of Legislature will be chosen? On one side is a statesman preaching patience, respect for vested rights, strict observance of public faith. On the other is a demagogue ranting about the tyranny of capitalists and usurers, and asking why anybody should be permitted to drink champagne and to ride in a carriage, while thousands of honest folks are in want of necessities. Which of the two candidates is likely to be preferred by a workingman who hears his children cry for more bread? I seriously apprehend that you will in some such season of adversity as I have described, do things which will prevent prosperity from returning; that you will act like people who should in a year of scarcity devour all the seed corn, and thus make the next year a

year not of scarcity, but of absolute famine. There will be, I fear, spoliation. There is nothing to stop you. Your Constitution is all sail and no anchor.

As I said before, when a society has entered on this downward progress, either civilization or liberty must perish. Either some Caesar or Napoleon will seize the reins of government with a strong hand, or your Republic will be as fearfully plundered and laid waste by barbarians in the 20th Century as the Roman Empire was in the fifth—with this difference, that the Huns and Vandals who ravaged the Roman Empire came from without, and that your Huns and Vandals will have been engendered within your own country by your own institutions.

Thinking thus, of course, I cannot reckon Jefferson among the benefactors of mankind. I readily admit that his intentions were good and his abilities considerable. Odious stories have been circulated about his private life; but I do not know on what evidence those stories rest, and I think it probable that they are false or monstrously exaggerated. I have no doubt that I shall derive both pleasure and information from your account of him.

T. B. M<sup>R</sup>CAULAY

*Holly Lodge*  
*May 23, 1857*



*"Has anybody ever thought of winning the Communists over to  
our way of life?"*

*Permission The New Yorker. Copy-  
right The F-R. Publishing Corporation.*



## PART V · THE INDIVIDUAL IN A WORLD SOCIETY

THE QUARRELS and problems that arise among individuals or groups are, as Carl Becker suggests, similar to the quarrels and problems among the nations of the world. Our behavior in these crises of change in the world's history is the more complicated by our assumption that international differences can be stated in universally agreed-upon terms. Unfortunately, this is not always true. Our solutions, whatever they may be, are subject to limitations. We cannot make the world anew; we must work with what we have, and we need new insights into and agreement upon the meanings of the old words and questions before we can see our way clearly.

These fresh views of the world of nations may be filled with fear and warning, as for Jeffers and Robinson who remark the shortsightedness of men, or with the reflecting calm before the tempest of MacNeice's "Autumn Journal," wherein writing in 1938 he sees the error of men's self-centeredness. The selections from Spender and Auden indicate that any solution of the problems among nations will involve new attitudes toward the past and new regards for the demands of others. But what is the relation between ourselves as individuals and these "others"? On the one hand, the exchange between Rodman and Shapiro suggests that the problem of conflict, especially in wartime, is a problem of genuine personal experience. On the other hand, MacLeish speaks for the dignity of the brotherhood which arises out of mutual suffering, and asks America to realize the possible greatness of her future. For Frost, one must also answer for one's own needs in attempting to satisfy the needs of others, and thus there appear the inevitable tensions and entanglements, the feeling of being "caught," suffered by the individual who merely accepts his place in the group or community. For Sandburg, the people, who are both "hero and hoodlum," are a source of the new as well as a reservoir of the old.

The fear of being caught and the desire to belong are the two opposites which constitute the individual's dilemma. The fate of Yank in O'Neill's play and of Halloran in Porter's story is not a necessary one for us. And when we enlarge our perspective to include international problems, we see that agreements among nations must take into account the personal demands and limitations of what Karl Shapiro calls the "private man."



# CAN WE ABOLISH POWER POLITICS AND END IMPERIALISM?

by CARL L. BECKER

FOR GOOD or evil, words often have great influence in their own right, apart from the things they represent. Like actors on the stage, they have their entrances and their exits, play an important role for a time, and then lose favor. They may, like men, be born free and equal, but like men they have their ups and downs. Certain words in particular suddenly acquire greater prestige than they deserve, and then after a time, from too much use or because the things they refer to have become sinister or merely ridiculous, they lose their popularity and either cease to be used at all or are used only to distort what they originally represented.

Such a word is "creative," which for a long time played a minor and becoming role. Then one day some critic or other used it to boost a book that he happened to like. Mr. X, he announced, was a "creative writer." The word caught on, and now nothing is any good unless it is "creative." Writer, artist, critic, interior decorator, cook—if he be not "creative" he may as well be damned. Too much use has beaten all sense out of the word, so that it has become merely ridiculous. Another such word is "refined." In the nineteenth century a person of cultivation, good manners, and good taste was a "person of refinement." It was a compliment—as much as to say: "he is the genuine article, a real guy." But in the course of time much of what in the nineteenth century was regarded as good manners and good taste came to seem artificial and affected—

something, like the Sunday suit, put on to make one look slicker than one usually is; so that now it is practically an insult to call a person "very refined." It means a person too nice and squeamish and innocent to be let out alone nights. In respect to persons, the word now merely distorts the thing it originally represented, and can be used seriously only in regard to products like sugar or alcohol.

Something of the same sort has happened to such good old words as "politics," "power," "empire," and "imperial." The term "politics" has taken on a certain unsavory meaning, as when we say "playing politics," or "it's only politics." In international relations playing politics, otherwise known as "the diplomatic game," has recently become a little more unsavory, or even sinister, by being described as "power politics." In the second century the term "Roman Empire" meant much the same thing as the term "civilization"; and to speak of the "sway of Imperial Rome" was to confer the highest distinction on that city. Long after the Roman Empire disappeared the thing itself was so much prized that men longed to have it restored, and even added to its high prestige by calling it the "Holy Roman Empire." But for a long time now the terms "empire" and "imperialism" have been terms of reproach.

During recent years the terms "power politics" and "imperialism" have come to be more than terms of reproach; they have come to denote something wholly evil.

Reprinted from *How New Will the Better World Be?* by Carl L. Becker, by permission of Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. Copyright, 1944, by Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.

## *Can We Abolish Power Politics and End Imperialism?*

The reason is that we identify them with the philosophy and practice of Hitler and the rulers of Japan. We are all convinced, and rightly so, that the kind of power politics which they practice and approve of is wholly evil, and that the kind of imperial domination which they aim to achieve is no less evil. And so all power politics and all imperialism seem to us wholly evil—something which we are not guilty of, something which we are fighting to destroy. It is chiefly for this reason that many people find it possible to think and say that after the war is over “power politics must be abandoned,” that “imperialism must end,” and that “the white man must get out of the Far East.”

It will be worth while to trace the history of these terms, and to examine the things which they refer to, in order to see whether the things referred to are in themselves wholly evil and whether in any case they can be easily ignored or got rid of.

### I

Something more than three thousand years ago the famous Greek philosopher Aristotle wrote a book, or left notes which were made into a book, entitled *Politics*. For Aristotle, and for the Greeks and Romans and the people of the Middle Ages, the term “politics” referred to the institutions, laws, customs, and moral and religious ideas by which men managed to live together in a community. Its meaning was not limited to the form of government and the making of laws, but included the economic activities and moral ideas of the community as well. But in the sixteenth century Machiavelli discussed the art of government without reference to morality and ethics; and in the next two centuries certain writers dealt with the activi-

ties by which men make a living and acquire wealth as a separate subject, which was called “political economy” or “economics.” Since that time the term “politics” has been commonly understood to refer to the form of government and laws and activities by which the people are governed.

In the eighteenth century, when people were mostly governed by absolute kings, there were of course no elections and no political parties; but there were influential noble families, and industrial “guilds,” and financial corporations—all representing certain interests, and all seeking to get the favor of the king. The head of a powerful noble family, for example, might for various reasons have great influence with the king (or with the king’s minister, or the king’s mistress), which of course he would use for getting what he wanted for his family or his friends. When he did this he was “playing politics,” but that isn’t what it was called at that time. It was said that he “had the ear of the king,” or that he was “making use of his interest through the minister.”

Then kings mostly lost their power, and in the nineteenth century in most European countries laws were made, as they are in the United States, by assemblies composed of representatives elected by the people. For getting the representatives elected and for advocating certain measures, political parties were formed; and those who made a business of managing the parties or getting elected to office were called “politicians.” The term “politics” came then to have a double meaning. In general it referred to the form of government and the making of laws; but it also referred to the activities of politicians in winning elections and getting laws passed that would be agreeable to the people who

supported their candidates. In an ideal democracy people are supposed to forget about their personal and private interests and to support measures that will serve the common interests of the nation. Many people do this all of the time, and most people do it some of the time. But it is not always, or often, easy to know what the common interest is, whereas it is always easy to know what is for the immediate interest of the individual or the group to which he belongs. In the United States there are many such groups—farmers, laborers, big business, commerce, the South, the industrial Northeast, the Middle West, and so on. It is no longer great families but these groups and sections that have a powerful "interest." They have not "the ear of the king," but they have the ear of their representatives in the House and Senate, and through them they have great influence in getting the laws passed that will be, or that they think will be, beneficial for them. They exert great "pressure," and this competitive struggle of the groups and sections for getting what they want whether it is for the common good or not is called "pressure politics." Since the groups have political power, it would be equally correct to call it "power politics."

The term "pressure politics" doesn't sound quite so bad as "power politics," and that may be why the one term is used for domestic politics whereas the other is reserved for international politics. But still, to those who are thinking of some ideal democracy, even the term "pressure politics" doesn't sound any too good. However it sounds, we all know that it expresses the way in which democracy actually works, and after all it is inevitable that it should work that way. By and large men pursue their own interests, and where the interest of a group is clearly discernible and can be promoted or injured by legislation, it

is inevitable that the group should try to promote or protect it by legislation. The practical justification for doing so is that democratic government rests on the will of the people, and the will of the people can be determined only by majority vote; and in practice the majority vote is determined by the competitive pressure of the various groups. The groups that at any time get what they want, by pressure on congressmen, log-rolling bargains, or otherwise, may be said to represent for that purpose and that time the will of the nation.

The trouble with this is that all people have many interests, some of which can be promoted by certain laws only at the expense of the others. Farmers and laborers are both "producers" and "consumers." As producers they want higher prices for what they sell; but as consumers they want lower prices for what they buy. Their interest as producers is more apparent to them, and more easily promoted by legislation, than their interest as consumers. Besides, everybody is a consumer and all consumers have, as consumers, the same interest; but the class of "everybody" which makes up the consumers is not organized, and therefore cannot easily exert "pressure" on legislation. We feel, therefore, that the term "pressure politics" doesn't sound quite right because pressure politics benefits only those who are organized to promote their private interests at the expense of the others. In such an emergency as the present war the term sounds worse than in times of peace. It is perfectly obvious that "playing politics" and "pressure politics" promote the private interest of some but interfere with the interest of the nation as a whole, which is to win the war and not to raise prices for farmers, or increase wages for industrial laborers, or secure fat profits for war con-

## *Can We Abolish Power Politics and End Imperialism?*

tractors. We see this, and so with one accord, or almost with one accord, we say: "Playing politics and pressure politics are out for the duration." We do not say that pressure politics "must be abandoned after the war is over." We are not quite so naïve or befuddled as to believe that. We just say that it must be out for the duration. And even that is a little naïve, because obviously it isn't entirely out even for the duration.

The technique of politics in international affairs is much the same as in national affairs, but this fact is obscured because the conditions are somewhat different and we use different terms to describe it. We speak of "international relations" instead of international "politics," of "playing the diplomatic game" instead of "playing politics," of "power politics" instead of "pressure politics." In international politics the interests involved are independent states instead of groups or sections within the state; the interests are promoted by exerting "power" rather than "pressure"; and the conflict of interests is resolved, not by a legislative body enacting laws that can be enforced by judicial process, but by treaties or agreements voluntarily subscribed to by the states involved. If the interests are regarded as vital and cannot be reconciled by agreement, the only way out in international politics is war. In national politics the conflict of interests between groups or sections may also become irreconcilable by peaceful means, although in strongly united nation-states this is less likely to happen; but when it does happen, the way out is the same as in international politics—civil war, which is sometimes called revolution.

There is, however, one very important difference between national and international politics. The conditions which separate nations are ordinarily more deep-

seated and permanent than those which separate groups within the nation. An English-speaking farmer in Iowa is, after all, not a "foreigner" to an English-speaking (or even a German-speaking) laborer in Detroit in the same sense, or to the same degree, that an Italian in Rome is a foreigner to an Englishman in London. For this reason the common interests of the various groups in the United States are more apparent, even if in the long run they are not more real, than the common interests of the various nations of Europe or of the world. And therefore the conflicts of interest more easily appear to be, even if they are not in fact, irreconcilable by peaceful means. And since there is no international government by which agreements can be enforced, any state which has sufficient power is in a position to use its power without any restraint except that which is self-imposed—the restraint which is imposed by its own sense of decency and justice. When the rulers of a powerful state, unrestrained by any sense of decency or justice because they have none, frankly adopt the doctrine that might makes right and ruthlessly act upon it, then "power politics" becomes the entirely evil thing that the present German government has made of it. But to suppose that power politics is always wholly evil because Hitler and his humorless, bleak-faced Nazi supporters have made a wholly evil use of it is only to obscure and distort the political realities of the world in which we live.

It obscures and distorts the political realities at the present moment by leading us to suppose that the United States is not, never has been, and never will be engaged in the game of "power politics" or concerned in anything so futile as the attempt to maintain peace by adjusting the "balance of power." The effect that can be produced by a slight shift in the use of

## *The Individual in a World Society*

words is indeed astonishing. We call attention every day to our great political power, to our mounting naval and military power, and to the certainty that this power will be sufficient to crush the power of Germany and Japan. Yet no one will admit that we are engaged in the nefarious business of power politics or that we are fighting for a restoration of the old balance of power. These are words that we associate with Germany and Japan. The things they represent must therefore be wholly evil. And so we easily delude ourselves by the notion that when Germany and Japan are crushed by our superior power, power politics will be abandoned and no one will be concerned to maintain the balance of power.

But if we regard things instead of words, it is clear that the term "power politics" is what the grammarians call a "redundancy." The simple fact is that politics is inseparable from power. States and governments exist to exert power, for the maintenance of order, the administration of justice, the defense of the community against aggression—in theory always and solely for these good ends. But the power, much or little, is always there, and will be used for some end, good, bad, or indifferent. In any country the government may be strong or weak. In the world at large there are great powers and minor powers. In each country and in the world at large there is either a stable balance of power, an unstable balance of power, or no balance of power at all. But there is always power. "Power," as Lionel Gerber says in his book *Peace by Power*, "never vanishes. If you do not wish to retain or wield it, somebody else will. You may feel the effects of power as a passive recipient; you may deal with it as an active agent. There is no escape, no immunity." Po-

litical power exists in the world and will be used by those who have it—for good ends we hope, but at all events for some ends.

In this very real sense all politics is power politics, and every accession of power redresses the balance in somebody's favor or to somebody's loss. The fact stands out before our eyes, grim and inescapable, as the controlling fact of our time—the fact that the present war is a manifestation of power politics on the grandest scale ever seen, and that the primary purpose of the United Nations in this game of power politics is to redress the balance of power against Germany and Japan and in their own favor. It will be said that the United Nations desire power only for good ends, whereas Germany and Japan desire it for bad ends. That is of course admitted. We cannot help thinking that the ends pursued by Germany and Japan are bad ends. Put at the lowest level, if you call it the lowest, they are bad ends because in so far as Germany and Japan gain power we lose it. That is enough to go on with. But whatever good ends we intend to use our power for after the war is over, our capacity to realize those ends will not be improved by supposing that we are not fighting this war to acquire political power, or that the result of winning it will not be a balance of power that is favorable to us, or that we can maintain peace and order in the world without resorting to power politics—that is to say, without using the political power we have acquired.

After the war is over, there will still be power politics, and no doubt there will be evils connected with it; but it need not be, and we have good reason to suppose that it will not be, the wholly evil thing

## *Can We Abolish Power Politics and End Imperialism?*

it has been in the hands of Germany and Japan. There will also be a balance of power, but that does not mean that we must or should return to the old balance-of-power *policy*. Hitler has indeed demonstrated, as Napoleon did before him, that the balance of power is not, like an electric clock, a self-regulating mechanism which needs only to be set up in order to keep the peace without further attention. That happy idea was born in the eighteenth century when there were, in Europe, six great powers about equally strong. The idea was that if each great power looked after its own interests without any regard to the others, any threatened domination by any one or two of them would automatically give rise to counteralliances sufficiently strong to redress the balance. Except for the smashing conquests of Napoleon, this idea worked well enough for two centuries, if not to prevent wars, at least to prevent any one power from destroying the political independence of any of the others. But this idea of a self-regulating balance will no longer serve any good purpose. The experience of the present war has shown that if each country looks after its own interests without regard to the others, the result is likely to be, not a stable balance of power, but a balance wholly in favor of aggressor states, and totally disastrous to the political and cultural independence of the others.

If peace is to be maintained by a proper balance of power, the balance must be in favor of those countries that desire to maintain peace and have the power to do so. It is after all Hitler and Hirohito who wish to destroy the balance of power, so that only the national interests of Germany and Japan can be served. When they are defeated the dominant power will be in the hands of Russia, Great Britain, the

United States, and China, in so far as China can make politically effective the potential strength of her people and resources. We cannot get rid of the power at the command of these countries, or of the balance of power that will exist throughout the world as a consequence of their having it. We can only hope, and do what we can to make it come true, that each of these great states will be disposed to regard the balance of power, not as something to be upset on every favorable opportunity for advancing its own selfish interests, but rather as something to be adjusted by mutual agreement, and with constant and considered attention to the maintenance of peace and the promotion of prosperous intercourse among nations.

Even those who deplore great political power because it is inherently dangerous (or most of them—there are always Gandhi and his followers) recognize that a "new and better world" cannot be made without it. They say, and everybody says, that there can be no new and better world unless Great Britain, Russia and the United States take a leading part in making it. But why these countries especially? Precisely because they have very great political power, precisely because they have sufficient power, if they work together, to determine what shall and shall not be done in the world and to see that it is or is not done. It is for this reason that these great states are so urgently recommended to assume their share of "the white man's burden" of "affording all nations the means of dwelling in safety within their own boundaries." They must, then, presumably, assume their share of this burden in the Far East as well as elsewhere. Nevertheless, many of the people who insist that they must take a leading part in doing all

this are the very people who say that "the white man must get out of the Far East" and "imperialism must be ended."

This brings us to the question, what is imperialism and what are the imperialist countries?

2

The terms "empire," "imperial," "imperialism" have had different meanings at different times. But the political reality which gave birth to these terms is, and always has been, only the most obvious and spectacular manifestation of power politics—that is to say, of political power. At successive periods during the last four or five thousand years certain favorably placed peoples have, within the limits set by circumstances and their own capacity, extended their political power over peoples of diverse origin and culture. Such extensions of political power, whether continental or maritime, have been called empires; so that by common usage we speak of the Babylonian, the Assyrian, the Median, and the Persian empires of very ancient times; of the Athenian, the Alexandrian, the Roman empires of a somewhat later time; of the Moslem, the Mongol, the Venetian, and the German empires of medieval times; and of the Portuguese, the Spanish, the Dutch, the French, the British, the Russian, and the Chinese empires of modern times. We do not commonly speak of the United States empire. Why not? I do not know. Since the United States has acquired Alaska, Puerto Rico, the Hawaiian Islands and the Philippines, and has thereby acquired what Walter Lippmann calls political "commitments" extending over half the globe, it has, by every common test, the right to be recognized as an empire, as one of the great imperial powers.

In modern times the term "empire" has come to be associated more particularly with those empires that have been created by what is called "colonial expansion." In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries Spain, France, Holland, and England explored and colonized the new world of America; and Portugal, Holland, France, and England obtained certain possessions and trade rights in India and the East Indian islands. In the eighteenth century "colonial expansion" took the form of a conflict between England and France for the possession of India and North America, which resulted in the defeat of France, both in America and in India. After the Napoleonic Wars the colonial movement eased off a good deal; but during the last quarter of the nineteenth century there occurred a rapid and extensive expansion of European political and economic power in the so-called "backward countries" of the world. The continent of Africa was largely taken over by Great Britain, France, Belgium, Germany, and Portugal. Russia extended her political control over Siberia and central Asia. The United States acquired Alaska, Puerto Rico, the Hawaiian and the Philippine Islands; and China was "opened up"—that is to say, the United States, Great Britain, France, Germany, and Russia acquired certain "extraterritorial" rights in China, such as the right to develop the economic resources of certain regions, the right to use certain ports as naval bases, and a variety of special rights in certain seaports known as "treaty ports." The opening up of China resulted in the Boxer Rebellion against the "foreign devils," but the armies of the foreign devils put down the rebellion, and then the Chinese government was required to pay heavy indemnities and to make certain further "concessions."

The reasons for this rapid expansion

## *Can We Abolish Power Politics and End Imperialism?*

into "backward countries" were chiefly economic—the pressure of European and American business enterprise seeking new opportunities for profit, the great demand for certain commodities essential to modern industry, such as oil and rubber, the pressure for new markets for the manufactured goods of the industrialized countries, the demand for political intervention in order to recover loans made through European banks to native rulers who defaulted, and so on. Taken as a whole, it was a pretty sordid and unheroic business. No country that took part in it has much if anything to be proud of. The story of the Boer War, of the Spanish-American War, of the Russo-Japanese War, of the Boxer Rebellion, of the methods employed by the United States to prevent the Filipinos from living under a government of their own choosing—the story of any or all of these episodes is for the most part a story of the oppression of the politically weak for the economic advantage of the strong.

It is to this late nineteenth-century mercenary scramble for "backward countries" that the term "imperialism" now especially refers. The term has a bad smell, because the thing itself had a bad smell. The thing has a worse smell now because the reasons often given at the time for rather shady enterprises now sound purely hypocritical. President McKinley said that after the defeat of Spain he could not decide whether to take the Philippines. He asked for divine guidance, and then suddenly, he knew not why, it was clear to him. To restore the Philippines to Spain would be "dishonorable"; to allow them to fall into the hands of Germany or Japan would be "bad business"; to recognize their independence would mean misrule and anarchy. He therefore decided that it was the duty of the United States to take the

Philippines, "educate the Filipinos, and uplift and civilize and Christianize them as our fellow-men." The English writer Rudyard Kipling justified the imperialism of the time in the same way, although he was far less crude, far more "refined," in his way of doing so than President McKinley. He invented the term "White Man's Burden," which became famous and has now acquired a merely cynical or hypocritical sound.

Take up the White Man's burden—  
Send forth the best ye breed—  
Go bind your sons to exile  
To serve your captives' need;  
To wait, in heavy harness,  
On fluttered folk and wild—  
Your new-caught, sullen peoples,  
Half-devil and half-child.

The idea was that if the white man took over the backward countries and ruled the backward peoples, it was for their own good: the little profit to be derived was no more than a fair return for bringing them the blessings of Western, Christian civilization.

This is but a recent version of the idea which has always been used to justify European conquest of other countries and alien people. Vasco da Gama, upon landing in India in the sixteenth century, is reported to have said: "We come in search of Christians—and spices." And to Columbus is attributed the saying: "Gold is excellent; gold is treasure, and he who possesses it does all that he wishes to in this world, and succeeds in helping souls into paradise." Neither man could perceive the irony that for us invests these statements with a cynical meaning not intended. They really believed that it was the "white man's burden" to Christianize and civilize the benighted races of the world, but we can no longer pronounce



## *The Individual in a World Society*

the phrase with a straight face. Since the time of Columbus, even since the time of Kipling, we have learned all about the subconscious, and how it enables us to conceal the "real" reasons for what we do by offering the "good" reasons which will sustain our moral credit. This is all very well. But, as often happens with a new idea, we have overdone it. In our reverision from the naïve self-deception of an earlier age we have gone too far and are in danger of becoming wise guys who deceive themselves by supposing that the real motives are always sordid and the professed motives never sincere.

Thus the term "imperialism" has fallen into complete disrepute. It refers only to the evils that have been associated with the colonial expansion of European states in Africa and Asia. To be an imperialist it seems that one must be a white man and a European, and a hidebound conservative, in national politics bent only on preserving class privilege, and in international politics inspired by nothing more laudable than the determination to hang on to the ill-gotten spoils of conquest in Asia and Africa. It is more or less to be taken for granted that an imperialist is either stupid or hypocritical, either a fool or a knave.

This doesn't matter much. What matters is that of all the great imperial countries the only one which our militant liberal internationalists seem to regard as imperialistic is Great Britain. From what I read I gather that neither the United States, Russia, nor China is now imperialistic; if they ever were, they have been converted. But Great Britain is still unregenerate, or its ruling class is; and it is the British Empire that will be the chief obstacle to a new and better world after the war is over. Our militant liberal in-

ternationalists are therefore much concerned for the salvation of the British Empire, and every week they pray for Mr. Churchill.

I open a recently published book on post-war reconstruction and find the following:

What broadly ought to be done with colonies in a world committed to abiding peace? Since colonies are the preserves of particular states no effective plan can be carried out unless the leading colonial powers co-operate by respectively undertaking measures that are necessary or desirable. *It so happens, however, that of the four greater powers among the allies three—the United States, Russia, and China—are virtually free from vested colonial interests. It may not be too visionary to hope that these could persuade the fourth, Britain, to join with them in setting up an entirely new regime in order to abolish the major evils and enmities that spring from colonial imperialism.*

This is a good example of a certain type of thinking about post-war reconstruction—thinking in terms of phrases or words with fixed meanings that distort the political realities. I suppose that if Siberia, with its eight or ten million of non-Russian inhabitants—Siberians, Chinese, Koreans—were an island or a group of islands separated from Russia by two thousand miles of water, there would be no difficulty in recognizing that Russia is an empire with very considerable "vested colonial interests." Or maybe the Chinese Empire would be regarded as imperialistic if Mongolia, Manchuria, Tibet, and Sinkiang were scattered about in the Indian Ocean and the Southwest Pacific. Fortunately for us, the Middle West, and the Louisiana Territory acquired in 1802, are not separated from the Atlantic seaboard and from each other by large bodies of

## *Can We Abolish Power Politics and End Imperialism?*

water, or we might suffer the disadvantage of being called the United Commonwealth of Nations and the American Empire. Apparently the best way for any people to avoid the stigma of imperialism is to be very prolific, running if possible to two hundred million, and to inhabit a great continent rather than a small island. It is at all events, I should think, not too visionary to suppose that if the United States, Russia, and China tried to persuade Great Britain to set up an entirely new regime in respect to her colonial possessions, Great Britain would probably want to know whether it was intended that the new regime should apply to Siberia, Sinkiang, Tibet, Puerto Rico, Hawaii, and the Philippines. The causes of modern imperialism are fundamentally economic, and the remedy . . . calls for something more than a friendly effort on the part of untainted governments to persuade the guilty to mend their ways.

The most unfortunate result of this distortion of the political realities is that it impairs the cordial relations which, both for winning the war and for making a durable peace, should exist between the United States and Great Britain. We have on all accounts more in common with the people of Great Britain and the British self-governing dominions than with any other people. We are united to them by a common language, a common literature, a common heritage of political ideas and institutions. And we are in this war, as we were in the last one, closely associated with them in the effort to defeat a common enemy. Nevertheless, many people in the United States are troubled by the idea that we are allied to an "imperialist" state (just as many others are troubled by the idea that we are allied with a "Communist" state). They may admire the British

and think well of the British Commonwealth of Nations; but there is for them something undercover and disingenuous about the British Empire. They may admit, even if somewhat grudgingly, that the British government is democratic. But why do the British, if they have a democratic government, have a king? And a king, moreover (and this is the real difficulty), who is Emperor of India? Forgetting that the United States rules alien people in Puerto Rico, Hawaii, and the Philippines, they ask why Great Britain, if it is really fighting for the freedom of all nations, does not immediately give India its freedom; and without asking President Roosevelt to abandon any of the overseas possessions of the United States, they find something Cliveden House and sinister in Mr. Churchill's frank statement that he did not become Prime Minister in order to preside at the dissolution of the British Empire.

It is for such superficial reasons as these that many people share Mr. Lindbergh's feeling that this war is no more than another clash of rival imperialisms, and applaud the statement attributed to Dorothy Thompson that she "would not lift a finger to save the British Empire as presently constituted." The statement (if Miss Thompson did, as reported, make it) reveals a strange inconsistency in thought and action. Miss Thompson may not have lifted a finger, but for many years now she has every week lifted her voice (and to very good purpose) to point out to the people of the United States the real nature of the Nazi political philosophy and practice, to arouse them to a proper sense of their danger from it, and to urge them to give all possible assistance to whatever countries are fighting to destroy it; and everything she has said and done to that

end, every dollar spent and ship cleared by the United States to aid in the defeat of Hitler, has had the effect, whatever its intention may have been, to save the British Empire as it is now constituted.

Let us not be hypnotized and befuddled by words. Let us say that Great Britain, Russia, China, and the United States are great imperial states, since that is what in fact they are. Let us admit, if it eases anyone's conscience, that they are "imperialistic" states. But let us place first things first, and judge imperial or imperialistic states by their works. It will then be seen that the imperialism which should now chiefly concern us is the imperialism of Germany and Japan. We can all agree that those particular manifestations of imperialism must be destroyed. We can all agree that the immediate aim of the present war is to destroy them; and the simple fact is that if we are now in a position to destroy them, it is because after the collapse of France the British Empire as now constituted was there, with its solid power, to carry on for twelve months single-handed a tenacious and successful resistance without which Hitler would long since have won the war.

The present moment is indeed a singularly inopportune time for the people of the United States, who cannot even repeal a poll tax designed to deprive Negroes of their rights as citizens, to cherish tender scruples about the purity of British imperialism. No doubt the British Empire has had, and still has, its faults and failures—as what great state has not? Certainly not the United States. But this may be said: in respect to political wisdom, restraint in the exercise of authority over alien people, and contribution to the spread of political freedom in the world, the British Empire does not suffer by com-

parison with any empire or great political power in ancient or modern times. The British Empire is a major political fact of our time, and should be judged, not by its isolated failures, but by its general achievements, not by what it has failed to do in the past but by what it is doing in the present crisis. So judged, one thing is, I should think, sufficiently obvious: if the political freedom which the British Empire guarantees and has long guaranteed in a large part of the world is to be preserved, if India is not to lose her present good prospect of obtaining a similar freedom and security, one essential thing for us to do now is to lift all our fingers to save the British Empire however constituted. How it may be constituted after the war is over we may well leave to the British and the people concerned, since we will undoubtedly, and rightly, expect them to leave to us the sufficiently difficult task of setting our own house in order.

3

It is said that we are fighting to preserve our political independence, but that after the war is over, the sovereign independence of states must be curbed. It is said that we are using our political power to destroy the political power of Germany and Japan, but that after the war is over power politics must be abandoned. It is said that after the war is over, imperialism must end and the white man must get out of the Far East, but that the great imperial white-man powers (the United States, Great Britain, and Russia) must co-operate with China in establishing and maintaining a durable peace in the Far East and throughout the world. It is said that in order to establish and maintain a durable peace in the world the four great

## *Can We Abolish Power Politics and End Imperialism?*

powers must work together in harmony and good faith, but that they must at the same time "respect the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live."

These are all good aims, but the mere bald statement of them in this conjunction and contrast is sufficient to raise many fundamental and fundamentally embarrassing questions. Some of these questions will be considered later, but only two are relevant to the discussion at this point. The first is: Can the white-man powers get out of the Far East and at the same time co-operate effectively with China in maintaining a durable peace in the Far East? The second is: Can the great powers work together in harmony for maintaining a durable peace in the world and at the same time recognize the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live?

What exactly is meant by saying that the white man must get out of the Far East? I suppose it does not mean that the Australians must get out of the Far East, although the Australians are white men and Australia is in the Far East. I take it to mean that the white man must abandon political and military control of those Far Eastern countries that are chiefly inhabited by other people. If this is what is meant, then it would seem that the white man should also get out of the Near East and Africa, since these regions are likewise inhabited by other people. But if the white man must get out of the Far East after the war is over, the question may well be asked why not do it now when the going, with the competent aid of Japan, is so good? Why should the white man fight so desperately to stay in the Far East if the consequence of his retaining the power to stay in is that he should immediately get out?

This question may appear merely frivolous to many liberal international idealists. But I think it entirely relevant to the situation, if for no other reason than that those who say that the white man must get out of the Far East after the war is over are mostly, as I suppose, altogether in favor of fighting the present war to a finish, and are now regretting, like the rest of us, that the white man did not get in more effectively before the war began—did not, that is to say, make himself impregnable in Singapore and the Straits, in the Dutch islands, in the Philippines and Hawaii. The reason for taking this view, they would no doubt say, is that the aggressive ambitions of Japan, united in purpose as they are with those of Germany, are a menace to the freedom and security of all freedom-loving peoples in Europe and America, in the Near and the Far East. For this reason the war must be fought to a finish and the power of Germany and Japan completely destroyed. But when the power of Japan, backed by Germany, is completely destroyed (so the argument seems to run), the menace to the freedom and security of China and the other nations of the Far East will be ended, and the white man (Russia, Great Britain, and the United States) can safely leave the Far East to the people who belong there—chiefly to the Chinese and the people of India.

Supposing the white man did this, what precisely would it mean? It would mean that Great Britain would withdraw her military and political power from India, Ceylon, North Borneo, the Straits Settlements, the Federated Malay States, Singapore, and Hong Kong; that Holland would withdraw from Java, Sumatra, Borneo, and other places inhabited by "peoples" totaling some sixty millions; that France would withdraw from Indo-

## *The Individual in a World Society*

China; that Russia would withdraw from all Asiatic possessions inhabited chiefly by non-Russians; and that the United States would withdraw from the Philippines and Hawaii. I do not think that any of these countries will make such a withdrawal. But supposing that Great Britain and the United States, feeling that with the destruction of Japanese power they were themselves safe, proposed to do so, I am wondering how safe the Chinese would feel. Would the Chinese welcome this method of co-operating with China for maintaining the peace of the Far East?

I do not know. But I should think that the Chinese, having maintained a desperate and heroic resistance against the senseless and barbarous oppression of the Japanese for six years (or will it be seven? Or eight?), would be well aware that although the power of Japan had been completely crushed, the Japanese would still be there, very close to them, waiting only for another opportunity to realize their aggressive ambitions. If I were a Chinese, that, I think, is what I should be most aware of, and I think I should feel much safer if Great Britain and the United States co-operated with my country in maintaining peace in the Far East by retaining a very considerable naval and air force there. The Chinese may wish the British to withdraw from Hong Kong, but will they wish them to withdraw from Singapore and the Straits? Will they wish the United States to weaken or to strengthen its naval and air force in the Philippines and Hawaii? We have offered the Filipinos independence, but do they want it now? Would the people of Hawaii wish the United States to withdraw and leave them to shift for themselves? And then there are the Australians. They also wish to live in peace and security

within their own boundaries. But how secure would they feel, and how much peace would they look forward to, if Great Britain withdrew its naval and air force from the Far East and the United States abandoned the Philippines and Hawaii? The Australians, I feel sure, will think that a durable peace can be maintained in the Far East only if Great Britain and the United States greatly increase their naval and air forces in the Straits and at Singapore, in Hawaii and the Philippines, in New Guinea and the Solomon Islands—and any other strategic islands they may pick up during the present war.

Call the United States, Russia, and Great Britain what you like—great, imperial, imperialist powers. Whatever you call them, two things seem to me to be outside the realm of practical politics. One is that they will “give up” their sovereign independence, or allow it to be “curbed” except in so far as they may themselves be willing to curb it. The other is that they will withdraw their naval and air forces (that is to say, the guarantee of their political power) from the Far East. The only hope for a durable peace in the Far East is that these three imperial powers may be able to co-operate with each other and with China in establishing a settlement that will be satisfactory to them and to the innumerable and ill-defined “peoples” of India and the East India islands.

The only hope of establishing a durable peace in Europe is that Great Britain, Russia, a reconstituted France, and the United States can co-operate in harmony and good faith to establish and maintain a settlement that will be satisfactory to them and that does not create in Germany and Italy and the ill-defined nations of eastern Europe and the Near East a per-

## *Can We Abolish Power Politics and End Imperialism?*

manent and dangerous sense of oppression and inferiority.

This brings us to the second question. Can the four great powers—Russia, Great Britain, a reconstituted France, and the United States—make and maintain a settlement that will take account of their several vital national interests (or what they regard as such) and at the same time recognize the right of all “nations” to live under governments of their own choosing.

It is visionary to suppose that these great powers will not have national interests which they regard as vital, or that these interests will not in some instances be in conflict. If they are to remain united in making and maintaining the peace of Europe, they will each have to make some concession to the interests of the others—in respect to Germany and Italy, in respect to the people of eastern Europe, the Near East, and northern Africa. In respect to Germany their interests need not be, so long as they stick together in other respects, in essential conflict. The United States, Russia, England, France, and the lesser countries of western Europe have a common interest in preventing any central great power from acquiring a dangerous ascendancy in Europe. None of these countries will recognize the right of Germans to live under a government of their own choosing if that right takes the form of another Nazi regime, or anything similar to it. The same is likely to be true in respect to the settlement of Italy. In respect to the defeated countries, therefore, the assumption that it is necessary for Russia, Great Britain, France, and the United States to remain united, if a durable peace is to be maintained, may or may not come into conflict with the assumption that it is in general desirable to “respect the right of all peoples to

choose the form of government under which they will live.” But what about the settlement of the other countries of Europe, of the Near East and northern Africa?

In respect to the settlement of the conquered and devastated countries of western Europe (France, Belgium, Holland, Denmark, and Norway) it is unlikely that any conflict of interests will arise between Russia, Great Britain, and the United States, or that there will be any difficulty in respecting the right of these peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live. These are all clearly defined and commonly recognized “nations,” and they have for a long time lived within certain boundaries not often or much changed, and under governments of their own choosing. There are no serious boundary disputes between any of them; and neither Russia, Great Britain, nor the United States wants any of their territory or will object to the form of government they may wish to establish. In these countries, therefore, the political settlement will not give rise to insuperable difficulties, but in eastern Europe and perhaps in North Africa the political settlement will be far less simple.

In Poland, for example, Russia has already declared that she will retain certain parts of the Polish state as constituted in 1939. Just what people are comprised in the Polish “nation” is none too clear, and just what territory should by “historic right” be regarded as Polish is even less clear. But assuming that all the people living under the Polish government in 1939 will after the war still wish to live under a Polish government of their own choosing, what should be the policy of the United States, Great Britain, and France in regard to the Polish settlement? Should

they insist on applying the principle that all peoples be permitted to live under governments of their own choosing, and so run the risk of breaking with Russia? Or should they concede the demands of Russia, and thus to that extent abandon the principle of national self-determination? It would do them little good to insist on the principle if Russia refuses to accept it, since in eastern Europe Russia has not only the major interest but also the major power. It seems to me unlikely that either Great Britain, France, or the United States would risk a breach with Russia, and thus destroy the only hope of maintaining a durable peace in Europe, for the sake of the ideal principle of national self-determination—especially in a case in which neither the nation nor the territory belonging to it is clearly defined. What demands, if any, Russia may make in respect to the settlement in the Balkans is not known. But in all states created by the Peace of Versailles bitter animosities between the various "national" groups, disputes among them for territorial possessions, and the certainty that there will be discontented minority groups whatever boundaries may be drawn are notorious and inescapable facts which will make it extremely difficult to apply the principle of national self-determination in any very satisfactory way.

In Africa the "imperial" interests that will interfere with any extended application of the principle of national self-determination are not those of Russia, but those of France, Great Britain, and indirectly the United States.

First of all, what are the "nations" of Africa? Egypt is undoubtedly one, and since 1922 has been recognized as an independent sovereign state. Ethiopia is undoubtedly another, and now that the Ital-

ians have been driven out is again living under a government of its own choosing. But the native inhabitants of Basutoland, Bechuanaland, Rhodesia, Swaziland, Kenya, Nyanza, Tanganyika, Nyasaland, Somaliland, Nigeria, Gambia—are these so many separate nations, and do they want Great Britain to withdraw and allow them to live under governments of their own choosing? Or the native inhabitants of French Congo, the Cameroons, Somaliland, and the island of Madagascar—are they so many separate nations, and do they want the French to withdraw and allow them to live under governments of their own choosing? Or, disregarding the Negro tribes of central Africa, what about the inhabitants of Libya, Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco? Do they regard themselves as separate nations, and do they wish to be entirely free from the control and "protection" of any European country?

I am merely asking, I do not know enough about any of these people to know the answers. But whatever the answers, I think it extremely unlikely that Great Britain will be disposed to withdraw from any part of Africa which she controlled before the war, and unless she is willing to do so she will be in no position to ask France to withdraw from the Congo, the Cameroons, or even from Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco. In any case I do not think Great Britain will wish France to withdraw from North Africa. Great Britain, and the United States too, if they are wise, will wish to have France as strong as possible, not only as a necessary balance in Europe against Germany, but as an indispensable aid to them in defending what Walter Lippmann calls "the Atlantic community." Whatever Great Britain and the United States may want, unless I am

## *Shine, Perishing Republic*

much mistaken the French themselves, who have found their North African empire the only place where they could gather their dispersed political and military force for beginning the reconquest of their country and its political independence, will think it the height of folly to abandon what has served them so well in the most serious crisis in all their history. Certainly in the present war the control of North Africa has proved to be a crucial factor in the defeat not only of Germany, but of Japan as well; and I think it highly improbable that either France, Great Britain, Russia, or the United States will consider that a durable peace can be maintained in the world if the military defense and the political direction of North Africa are turned over entirely to the politically weak nations of Libya, Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco. Is it even certain that the people of North Africa would welcome the responsibility involved in so much freedom?

Such are some of the difficulties involved in any attempt to apply the prin-

ciple of the "right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live." We cannot have it both ways. If we urge the great powers to fight desperately in order to preserve their political independence, and applaud them for doing it, we can hardly expect them to "give up" their political independence after the war is over. If we insist that the great powers remain united in order to establish and maintain a durable peace in the world, we must concede them the privilege of basing such a peace on what they regard as their vital interests and of using the power they have, and exerting the "pressure" needed at strategic points on the globe, to make and maintain it. At least that much "power politics" and "imperialism" will exist after the war is over, and will be the necessary condition of any new and better world. If it be said that the great states cannot be trusted with so much "uncurbed" power, the answer is that we must trust them with the power since they have it. It remains to be seen whether they can trust each other.

## SHINE, PERISHING REPUBLIC

by ROBINSON JEFFERS

While this America settles in the mould of its vulgarity, heavily thickening to empire,  
And protest, only a bubble in the molten mass, pops and sighs out, and the mass  
hardens,

I sadly smiling remember that the flower fades to make fruit, the fruit rots to make  
earth.

Out of the mother; and through the spring exultances, ripeness and decadence; and  
home to the mother.

From *The Selected Poetry of Robinson Jeffers*. Copyright, 1937, by Robinson Jeffers. Reprinted by permission of Random House, Inc.



## *The Individual in a World Society*

You making haste on decay: not blameworthy; life is good, be it stubbornly  
long or suddenly

A mortal splendor: meteors are not needed less than mountains: shine, perishing  
republic.

But for my children, I would have them keep their distance from the thickening  
center; corruption

Never has been compulsory, when the cities lie at the monster's feet there are left  
the mountains.

And boys, be in nothing so moderate as in love of man, a clever servant, insufferable  
master.

There is the trap that catches noblest spirits, that caught—they say—God, when he  
walked on earth.

## THE PURSE-SEINE

*by* ROBINSON JEFFERS

Our sardine fishermen work at night in the dark of the moon; daylight or moon-  
light

They could not tell where to spread the net, unable to see the phosphorescence of  
the shoals of fish.

They work northward from Monterey, coasting Santa Cruz; off New Year's Point  
or off Pigeon Point

The look-out man will see some lakes of milk-color light on the sea's night-purple;  
he points, and the helmsman

Turns the dark prow, the motorboat circles the gleaming shoal and drifts out her  
seine-net. They close the circle

And purse the bottom of the net, then with great labor haul it in.

I cannot tell you

How beautiful the scene is, and a little terrible, then, when the crowded fish

Know they are caught, and wildly beat from one wall to the other of their closing  
destiny the phosphorescent

Water to a pool of flame, each beautiful slender body sheeted with flame, like a live  
rocket

A comet's tail wake of clear yellow flame; while outside the narrowing

Floats and cordage of the net great sea-lions come up to watch, sighing in the dark;  
the vast walls of night

Stand erect to the stars.

From *The Selected Poetry of Robinson Jeffers*. Copyright, 1937, by Robinson Jeffers. Reprinted  
by permission of Random House, Inc.

## *The Answer*

Lately I was looking from a night mountain-top  
On a wide city, the colored splendor, galaxies of light: how could I help but recall  
the seine-net  
Gathering the luminous fish? I cannot tell you how beautiful the city appeared,  
and a little terrible.  
I thought, We have geared the machines and locked all together into interdependence;  
we have built the great cities; now  
There is no escape. We have gathered vast populations incapable of free survival,  
insulated  
From the strong earth, each person in himself helpless, on all dependent. The circle  
is closed, and the net  
Is being hauled in. They hardly feel the cords drawing, yet they shine already. The  
inevitable mass-disasters  
Will not come in our time nor in our children's, but we and our children  
Must watch the net draw narrower, government take all powers—or revolution,  
and the new government  
Take more than all, add to kept bodies kept souls—or anarchy, the mass-disasters:

These things are Progress;  
Do you marvel our verse is troubled or frowning, while it keeps its reason? Or it  
lets go, lets the mood flow  
In the manner of the recent young men into mere hysteria, splintered gleams,  
crackled laughter. But they are quite wrong.  
There is no reason for amazement: surely one always knew that cultures decay, and  
life's end is death.

## THE ANSWER

by ROBINSON JEFFERS

Then what is the answer?—Not to be deluded by dreams.  
To know that great civilizations have broken down into violence, and their tyrants  
come, many times before.  
When open violence appears, to avoid it with honor or choose the least ugly faction;  
these evils are essential.  
To keep one's own integrity, be merciful and uncorrupted and not wish for evil;  
and not be duped  
By dreams of universal justice or happiness. These dreams will not be fulfilled.  
To know this, and know that however ugly the parts appear the whole remains  
beautiful. A severed hand  
Is an ugly thing, and man dissevered from the earth and stars and his history . . .  
for contemplation or in fact . . .

From *The Selected Poetry of Robinson Jeffers*. Copyright, 1937, by Robinson Jeffers. Reprinted  
by permission of Random House, Inc.

## *The Individual in a World Society*

Often appears atrociously ugly. Integrity is wholeness, the greatest beauty is  
Organic wholeness, the wholeness of life and things, the divine beauty of the uni-  
verse. Love that, not man  
Apart from that, or else you will share man's pitiful confusions, or drown in despair  
when his days darken.

### CASSANDRA

by EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON

I heard one who said: "Verily,  
What word have I for children here?  
Your Dollar is your only Word,  
The wrath of it your only fear.

"You build it altars tall enough  
To make you see, but you are blind;  
You cannot leave it long enough  
To look before you or behind.

"When Reason beckons you to pause,  
You laugh and say that you know best;  
But what it is you know, you keep  
As dark as ingots in a chest.

"You laugh and answer, 'We are young;  
O leave us now, and let us grow.'—  
Not asking how much more of this  
Will Time endure or Fate bestow.

"Because a few complacent years  
Have made your peril of your pride,  
Think you that you are to go on  
Forever pampered and untried?

"What lost eclipse of history,  
What bivouac of the marching stars,  
Has given the sign for you to see  
Millenniums and last great wars?

"What unrecorded overthrow  
Of all the world has ever known,  
Or ever been, has made itself  
So plain to you, and you alone?

"Your Dollar, Dove, and Eagle make  
A Trinity that even you  
Rate higher than you rate yourselves;  
It pays, it flatters, and it's new.

"And though your very flesh and blood  
Be what your Eagle eats and drinks,  
You'll praise him for the best of birds,  
Not knowing what the Eagle thinks.

"The power is yours, but not the sight;  
You see not upon what you tread;  
You have the ages for your guide,  
But not the wisdom to be led.

"Think you to tread forever down  
The merciless old verities?  
And are you never to have eyes  
To see the world for what it is?

"Are you to pay for what you have  
With all you are?"—No other word  
We caught, but with a laughing crowd  
Moved on. None heeded, and few heard.

From E. A. Robinson, *Collected Poems*. By permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers.

## NOT PALACES, AN ERA'S CROWN

by STEPHEN SPENDER

Not palaces, an era's crown  
Where the mind dwells, intrigues, rests;  
The architectural gold-leaved flower  
From people ordered like a single mind,  
I build. This only what I tell:  
It is too late for rare accumulation  
For family pride, for beauty's filtered  
dusts;  
I say, stamping the words with emphasis,  
Drink from here energy and only energy,  
As from the electric charge of a battery,  
To will this Time's change.  
Eye, gazelle, delicate wanderer,  
Drinker of horizon's fluid line;  
Ear that suspends on a chord  
The spirit drinking timelessness;  
Touch, love, all senses;  
Leave your gardens, your singing feasts,  
Your dreams of suns circling before our  
sun,

Of heaven after our world.  
Instead, watch images of flashing brass  
That strike the outward sense, the polished will  
Flag of our purpose which the wind engraves.  
No spirit seek here rest. But this: No man  
Shall hunger: Man shall spend equally.  
Our goal which we compel: Man shall be  
man.

—That programme of the antique Satan  
Bristling with guns on the indented page  
With battleship towering from hilly  
waves:  
For what? Drive of a ruining purpose  
Destroying all but its age-long exploiters.  
Our programme like this, yet opposite,  
Death to the killers, bringing light to life.

From Stephen Spender, *Poems*. Copyright, 1934, by the Modern Library, Inc. Reprinted by permission of Random House, Inc.

SEPTEMBER 1, 1939

by W. H. AUDEN

I sit in one of the dives  
On Fifty-second Street  
Uncertain and afraid  
As the clever hopes expire  
Of a low dishonest decade:  
Waves of anger and fear  
Circulate over the bright  
And darkened lands of the earth,  
Obsessing our private lives;  
The unmentionable odour of death  
Offends the September night.

Accurate scholarship can  
Unearth the whole offence  
From Luther until now  
That has driven a culture mad,  
Find what occurred at Linz,  
What huge imago made  
A psychopathic god:  
I and the public know  
What all schoolchildren learn,  
Those to whom evil is done  
Do evil in return.

From *The Collected Poetry of W. H. Auden*. Copyright, 1945, by W. H. Auden. Reprinted by permission of Random House, Inc.

## *The Individual in a World Society*

Exiled Thucydides knew  
All that a speech can say  
About Democracy,  
And what dictators do,  
The elderly rubbish they talk  
To an apathetic grave;  
Analysed all in his book,  
The enlightenment driven away,  
The habit-forming pain,  
Mismanagement and grief:  
We must suffer them all again.

Into this neutral air  
Where blind skyscrapers use  
Their full height to proclaim  
The strength of Collective Man,  
Each language pours its vain  
Competitive excuse:  
But who can live for long  
In an euphoric dream;  
Out of the mirror they stare,  
Imperialism's face  
And the international wrong.

Faces along the bar  
Cling to their average day:  
The lights must never go out,  
The music must always play,  
All the conventions conspire  
To make this fort assume  
The furniture of home;  
Lest we should see where we are,  
Lost in a haunted wood,  
Children afraid of the night  
Who have never been happy or good.

The windiest militant trash  
Important Persons shout  
Is not so crude as our wish:  
What mad Nijinsky wrote  
About Diaghilev  
Is true of the normal heart;  
For the error bred in the bone  
Of each woman and each man  
Craves what it cannot have,  
Not universal love  
But to be loved alone.

From the conservative dark  
Into the ethical life  
The dense commuters come,  
Repeating their morning vow;  
"I *will* be true to the wife,  
I'll concentrate more on my work,"  
And helpless governors wake  
To resume their compulsory game:  
Who can release them now,  
Who can reach the deaf,  
Who can speak for the dumb?

Defenceless under the night  
Our world in stupor lies;  
Yet, dotted everywhere,  
Ironical points of light  
Flash out where'er the Just  
Exchange their messages:  
May I, composed like them  
Of Eros and of dust,  
Beleaguered by the same  
Negation and despair,  
Show an affirming flame.

## REFUGEE BLUES

*by* W. H. AUDEN

Say this city has ten million souls,  
Some are living in mansions, some are living in holes:  
Yet there's no place for us, my dear, yet there's no place for us.

From *The Collected Poetry of W. H. Auden*. Copyright, 1945, by W. H. Auden. Reprinted by permission of Random House, Inc.

## *Refugee Blues*

Once we had a country and we thought it fair,  
Look in the atlas and you'll find it there:  
We cannot go there now, my dear, we cannot go there now.

In the village churchyard there grows an old yew,  
Every spring it blossoms anew:  
Old passports can't do that, my dear, old passports can't do that.

The consul banged the table and said:  
"If you've got no passport you're officially dead":  
But we are still alive, my dear, but we are still alive.

Went to a committee; they offered me a chair;  
Asked me politely to return next year:  
But where shall we go today, my dear, but where shall we go today?

Came to a public meeting; the speaker got up and said:  
"If we let them in, they will steal our daily bread";  
He was talking of you and me, my dear, he was talking of you and me.

Thought I heard the thunder rumbling in the sky;  
It was Hitler over Europe, saying: "They must die";  
O we were in his mind, my dear, O we were in his mind.

Saw a poodle in a jacket fastened with a pin,  
Saw a door opened and a cat let in:  
But they weren't German Jews, my dear, but they weren't German Jews.

Went down the harbour and stood upon the quay,  
Saw the fish swimming as if they were free:  
Only ten feet away, my dear, only ten feet away.

Walked through a wood, saw the birds in the trees;  
They had no politicians and sang at their ease:  
They weren't the human race, my dear, they weren't the human race.

Dreamed I saw a building with a thousand floors,  
A thousand windows and a thousand doors;  
Not one of them was ours, my dear, not one of them was ours.

Stood on a great plain in the falling snow;  
Ten thousand soldiers marched to and fro:  
Looking for you and me, my dear, looking for you and me.

from AUTUMN JOURNAL

by LOUIS MACNEICE

III

August is nearly over, the people  
Back from holiday are tanned  
With blistered thumbs and a wallet of snaps and a little  
*Joie de vivre* which is contraband;  
Whose stamina is enough to face the annual  
Wait for the annual spree,  
Whose memories are stamped with specks of sunshine  
Like faded *fleurs de lys*.  
Now the till and the typewriter call the fingers,  
The workman gathers his tools  
For the eight-hour day but after that the solace  
Of films or football pools  
Or of the gossip or cuddle, the moments of self-glory  
Or self-indulgence, blinkers on the eyes of doubt,  
The blue smoke rising and the brown lace sinking  
In the empty glass of stout.  
Most are accepters, born and bred to harness,  
And take things as they come,  
But some refusing harness and more who are refused it  
Would pray that another and a better Kingdom come,  
Which now is sketched in the air or travestied in slogans  
Written in chalk or tar on stucco or plaster-board  
But in time may find its body in men's bodies,  
Its law and order in their hearts' accord,  
Where skill will no longer languish nor energy be trammelled  
To competition and graft,  
Exploited in subservience but not allegiance  
To an utterly lost and daft  
System that gives a few at fancy prices .  
Their fancy lives  
While ninety-nine in the hundred who never attend the banquet  
Must wash the grease of ages off the knives.  
And now the tempter whispers "But you also  
Have the slave-owner's mind,  
Would like to sleep on a mattress of easy profits,  
To snap your fingers or a whip and find  
Servants or houris ready to wince and flatter  
And build with their degradation your self-esteem;

From *Autumn Journal* by Louis MacNeice. Copyright, 1939, by the Modern Library, Inc.  
Reprinted by permission of Random House, Inc.

What you want is not a world of the free in function  
But a niche at the top, the skimmings of the cream."  
And I answer that that is largely so for habit makes me  
Think victory for one implies another's defeat,  
That freedom means the power to order, and that in order  
To preserve the values dear to the élite  
The élite must remain a few. It is so hard to imagine  
A world where the many would have their chance without  
A fall in the standard of intellectual living  
And nothing left that the highbrow cared about.  
Which fears must be suppressed. There is no reason for thinking  
That, if you give a chance to people to think or live,  
The arts of thought or life will suffer and become rougher  
And not return more than you could ever give.  
And now I relapse to sleep, to dreams perhaps and reaction  
Where I shall play the gangster or the sheikh,  
Kill for the love of killing, make the world my sofa,  
Unzip the women and insult the meek.  
Which fantasies no doubt are due to my private history,  
Matter for the analyst,  
But the final cure is not in his past-dissecting fingers  
But in a future of action, the will and fist  
Of those who abjure the luxury of self-pity,  
And prefer to risk a movement without being sure  
If movement would be better or worse in a hundred  
Years or a thousand when their heart is pure.  
None of our hearts are pure, we always have mixed motives,  
Are self deceivers, but the worst of all  
Deceits is to murmur "Lord, I am not worthy"  
And, lying easy, turn your face to the wall.  
But may I cure that habit, look up and outwards  
And may my feet follow my wider glance  
First no doubt to stumble, then to walk with the others  
And in the end—with time and luck—to dance.

VII

Conferences, adjournments, ultimatums,  
Flights in the air, castles in the air,  
The autopsy of treaties, dynamite under the bridges,  
The end of *laissez faire*.  
After the warm days the rain comes pimpling  
The paving stones with white  
And with the rain the national conscience, creeping,  
Seeping through the night.  
And in the sodden park on Sunday protest



### *The Individual in a World Society*

Meetings assemble not, as so often, now  
Merely to advertise some patent panacea  
But simply to avow  
The need to hold the ditch; a bare avowal  
That may perhaps imply  
Death at the doors in a week but perhaps in the long run  
Exposure of the lie.  
Think of a number, double it, treble it, square it,  
And sponge it out  
And repeat *ad lib.* and mark the slate with crosses;  
There is no time to doubt  
If the puzzle really has an answer. Hitler yells on the wireless,  
The night is damp and still  
And I hear dull blows on wood outside my window;  
They are cutting down the trees on Primrose Hill.  
The wood is white like the roast flesh of chicken,  
Each tree falling like a closing fan;  
No more looking at the view from seats beneath the branches,  
Everything is going to plan;  
They want the crest of this hill for anti-aircraft,  
The guns will take the view  
And searchlights probe the heavens for bacilli  
With narrow wands of blue.  
And the rain came on as I watched the territorials  
Sawing and chopping and pulling on ropes like a team  
In a village tug-of-war; and I found my dog had vanished  
And thought "This is the end of the old régime,"  
But found the police had got her at St. John's Wood station  
And fetched her in the rain and went for a cup  
Of coffee to an all-night shelter and heard a taxi-driver  
Say "It turns me up  
When I see these soldiers in lorries"—rumble of tumbrils  
Drums in the trees  
Breaking the eardrums of the ravished dryads—  
It turns me up; a coffee, please.  
And as I go out I see a windscreen-wiper  
In an empty car  
Wiping away like mad and I feel astounded  
That things have gone so far.  
And I come back here to my flat and wonder whether  
From now on I need take  
The trouble to go out choosing stuff for curtains  
As I don't know anyone to make  
Curtains quickly. Rather one should quickly  
Stop the cracks for gas or dig a trench

### *Autumn Journal*

And take one's paltry measures against the coming  
Of the unknown Uebermensch.  
But one—meaning I—is-bored, am bored, the issue  
Involving principle but bound in fact  
To squander principle in panic and self-deception—  
Accessories after the act,  
So that all we foresee is rivers in spate sprouting  
With drowning hands  
And men like dead frogs floating till the rivers  
Lose themselves in the sands.  
And we who have been brought up to think of "Gallant Belgium"  
As so much blague  
Are now preparing again to essay good through evil  
For the sake of Prague;  
And must, we suppose, become uncritical, vindictive,  
And must, in order to beat  
The enemy, model ourselves upon the enemy,  
A howling radio for our paraclete.  
The night continues wet, the axe keeps falling,  
The hill grows bald and bleak  
No longer one of the sights of London but maybe  
We shall have fireworks here by this day week.

### IX

Now we are back to normal, now the mind is  
Back to the even tenor of the usual day  
Skidding no longer across the uneasy camber  
Of the nightmare way.  
*We* are safe though others have crashed the railings  
Over the river ravine; their wheel-tracks carve the bank  
But after the event all we can do is argue  
And count the widening ripples where they sank.  
October comes with rain whipping around the ankles  
In waves of white at night  
And filling the raw clay trenches (the parks of London  
Are a nasty sight).  
In a week I return to work, lecturing, coaching,  
As impresario of the Ancient Greeks  
Who wore the chiton and lived on fish and olives  
And talked philosophy or smut in cliques;  
Who believed in youth and did not gloze the unpleasant  
Consequences of age;  
What is life, one said, or what is pleasant  
Once you have turned the page

*The Individual in a World Society*

Of love? The days grow worse, the dice are loaded  
Against the living man who pays in tears for breath;  
Never to be born was the best, call no man happy  
This side death.  
Conscious—long before Engels—of necessity  
And therein free  
They plotted out their life with truism and humour  
Between the jealous heaven and the callous sea.  
And Pindar sang the garland of wild olive  
And Alcibiades lived from hand to mouth  
Double-crossing Athens, Persia, Sparta,  
And many died in the city of plague, and many of drouth  
In Sicilian quarries, and many by the spear and arrow  
And many more who told their lies too late  
Caught in the eternal factions and reactions  
Of the city-state.  
And free speech shivered on the pikes of Macedonia  
And later on the swords of Rome  
And Athens became a mere university city  
And the goddess born of the foam  
Became the kept hetaera, heroine of Menander,  
And the philosopher narrowed his focus, confined  
His efforts to putting his own soul in order  
And keeping a quiet mind.  
And for a thousand years they went on talking,  
Making such apt remarks,  
A race no longer of heroes but of professors  
And crooked business men and secretaries and clerks;  
Who turned out dapper little elegiac verses  
On the ironies of fate, the transience of all  
Affections, carefully shunning an over-statement  
But working the dying fall.  
The Glory that was Greece: put it in a syllabus, grade it  
Page by page  
To train the mind or even to point a moral  
For the present age:  
Models of logic and lucidity, dignity, sanity,  
The golden mean between opposing ills  
Though there were exceptions of course but only exceptions—  
The bloody Bacchanals on the Thracian hills.  
So the humanist in his room with Jacobean panels  
Chewing his pipe and looking on a lazy quad  
Chops the Ancient World to turn a sermon  
To the greater glory of God.  
But I can do nothing so useful or so simple;

These dead are dead  
And when I should remember the paragons of Hellas  
I think instead  
Of the crooks, the adventurers, the opportunists,  
The careless athletes and the fancy boys,  
The hair-splitters, the pedants, the hard-boiled sceptics  
And the Agora and the noise  
Of the demagogues and the quacks; and the women pouring  
Libations over graves  
And the trimmers at Delphi and the dummies at Sparta and lastly  
I think of the slaves.  
And how one can imagine oneself among them  
I do not know;  
It was all so unimaginably different  
And all so long ago.

XII

These days are misty, insulated, mute  
Like a faded tapestry and the soft pedal  
Is down and the yellow leaves are falling down  
And we hardly have the heart to meddle  
Any more with personal ethics or public calls;  
People have not recovered from the crisis,  
Their faces are far away, the tone of the words  
Belies their thesis.  
For they say that now it is time unequivocally to act,  
To let the pawns be taken,  
That criticism, a virtue previously,  
Now can only weaken  
And that when we go to Rome  
We must do as the Romans do, cry out together  
For bread and circuses; put on your togas now  
For this is Roman weather.  
Circuses of death and from the topmost tiers  
A cataract of goggling, roaring faces;  
On the arena sand  
Those who are about to die try out their paces.  
Now it is night, a cold mist creeps, the night  
Is still and damp and lonely;  
Sitting by the fire it is hard to realise  
That the legions wait at the gates and that there is only  
A little time for rest though not by rights for rest,  
Rather for whetting the will, for calculating  
A compromise between necessity and wish,  
Apprenticed late to learn the trade of hating.

### *The Individual in a World Society*

Remember the sergeant barking at bayonet practice  
When you were small;  
To kill a dummy you must act a dummy  
Or you cut no ice at all.  
Now it is morning again, the 25th of October,  
In a white fog the cars have yellow lights;  
The chill creeps up the wrists, the sun is fallow,  
The silent hours grow down like stalactites.  
And reading Plato talking about his Forms  
To damn the artist touting round his mirror,  
I am glad that I have been left the third best bed  
And live in a world of error.  
His world of capital initials, of transcendent  
Ideas is too bleak;  
For me there remain to all intents and purposes  
Seven days in the week  
And no one Tuesday is another and you destroy it  
If you subtract the difference and relate  
It merely to the Form of Tuesday. This is Tuesday  
The 25th of October, 1938.  
Aristotle was better who watched the insect breed,  
The natural world develop,  
Stressing the function, scrapping the Form in Itself,  
Taking the horse from the shelf and letting it gallop.  
Education gives us too many labels  
And clichés, cuts too many Gordian knots;  
Trains us to keep the roads nor reconnoitre  
Any of the beauty-spots or danger-spots.  
Not that I would rather be a peasant; the Happy Peasant  
Like the Noble Savage is a myth;  
I do not envy the self-possession of an elm-tree  
Nor the aplomb of a granite monolith.  
All that I would like to be is human, having a share  
In a civilised, articulate and well-adjusted  
Community where the mind is given its due  
But the body is not distrusted.  
As it is, the so-called humane studies  
May lead to cushy jobs  
But leave the men who land them spiritually bankrupt  
Intellectual snobs.  
Not but what I am glad to have my comforts,  
Better authentic mammon than a bogus god;  
If it were not for Lit.Hum. I might be climbing  
A ladder with a hod.  
And seven hundred a year

## *Autumn Journal*

Will pay the rent and the gas and the 'phone and the grocer;  
(The Emperor takes his seat beneath the awning,  
Those who are about to die . . .) Come, pull the curtains closer.

### XV

Shelley and jazz and lieder and love and hymn-tunes  
And day returns too soon;  
We'll get drunk among the roses  
In the valley of the moon.  
Give me an aphrodisiac, give me lotus,  
Give me the same again;  
Make all the erotic poets of Rome and Ionia  
And Florence and Provence and Spain  
Pay a tithe of their sugar to my potion  
And ferment my days  
With the twang of Hawaii and the boom of the Congo;  
Let the old Muse loosen her stays  
Or give me a new Muse with stockings and suspenders  
And a smile like a cat,  
With false eyelashes and finger-nails of carmine  
And dressed by Schiaparelli, with a pill-box hat.  
Let the aces run riot round Brooklands,  
Let the tape-machines go drunk,  
Turn on the purple spotlight, pull out the Vox Humana,  
Dig up somebody's body in a cloakroom trunk.  
Give us sensations and then again sensations—  
Strip-tease, fireworks, all-in wrestling, gin;  
Spend your capital, open your house and pawn your padlocks,  
Let the critical sense go out and the Roaring Boys come in.  
Give me a houri but houris are too easy,  
Give me a nun;  
We'll rape the angels off the golden reredos  
Before we're done.  
Tiger-women and Lesbos, drums and entrails,  
And let the skies rotate,  
We'll play roulette with the stars, we'll sit out drinking  
At the Hangman's Gate.  
O look who comes here. I cannot see their faces  
Walking in file, slowly in file;  
They have no shoes on their feet, the knobs of their ankles  
Catch the moonlight as they pass the stile  
And cross the moor among the skeletons of bog-oak  
Following the track from the gallows back to the town;  
Each has the end of a rope around his neck. I wonder  
Who let these men come back, who cut them down—

### *The Individual in a World Society*

And now they reach the gate and line up opposite  
The neon lights on the medieval wall  
And underneath the sky-signs  
Each one takes his cowl and lets it fall  
And we see their faces, each the same as the other,  
Men and women, each like a closed door,  
But something about their faces is familiar;  
Where have we seen them before?  
Was it the murderer on the nursery ceiling  
Or Judas Iscariot in the Field of Blood  
Or someone at Gallipoli or in Flanders  
Caught in the end-all mud.  
But take no notice of them, out with the ukulele,  
The saxophone and the dice;  
They are sure to go away if we take no notice;  
Another round of drinks or make it twice.  
That was a good one, tell us another, don't stop talking,  
Cap your stories; if  
You haven't any new ones tell the old ones,  
Tell them as often as you like and perhaps those horrible stiff  
People with blank faces that are yet familiar  
Won't be there when you look again, but don't  
Look just yet, just give them time to vanish. I said to vanish;  
What do you mean—they won't?  
Give us the songs of Harlem or Mitylene—  
Pearls in wine—  
There can't be a hell unless there is a heaven  
And a devil would have to be divine  
And there can't be such things one way or the other;  
That we know;  
You can't step into the same river twice so there can't be  
Ghosts; thank God that rivers always flow.  
Sufficient to the moment is the moment;  
Past and future merely don't make sense  
And yet I thought I had seen them . . .  
But *how*, if there is only a present tense?  
Come on, boys, we aren't afraid of bogies,  
Give us another drink;  
This little lady has a fetish,  
She goes to bed in mink.  
This little pig went to market—  
Now I think you may look, I think the coast is clear.  
Well, why don't you answer?  
I can't answer because they are still there.

*Autumn Journal*

*from XXIV*

What is it we want really?  
For what end and how?  
If it is something feasible, obtainable,  
Let us dream it now,  
And pray for a possible land  
Not of sleep-walkers, not of angry puppets,  
But where both heart and brain can understand  
The movements of our fellows;  
Where life is a choice of instruments and none  
Is debarred his natural music,  
Where the waters of life are free of the ice-blockade of hunger  
And thought is free as the sun,  
Where the altars of sheer power and mere profit  
Have fallen to disuse,  
Where nobody sees the use  
Of buying money and blood at the cost of blood and money,  
Where the individual, no longer squandered  
In self-assertion, works with the rest, endowed  
With the split vision of a juggler and the quick lock of a taxi,  
Where the people are more than a crowd.  
So sleep in hope of this—but only for a little;  
Your hope must wake  
While the choice is yours to make,  
The mortgage not foreclosed, the offer open.  
Sleep serene, avoid the backward  
Glance; go forward, dreams, and do not halt  
(Behind you in the desert stands a token  
Of doubt—a pillar of salt).  
Sleep, the past, and wake, the future,  
And walk out promptly through the open door;  
But you, my coward doubts, may go on sleeping,  
You need not wake again—not any more.  
The New Year comes with bombs, it is too late  
To dose the dead with honourable intentions:  
If you have honour to spare, employ it on the living;  
The dead are dead as 1938.  
Sleep to the noise of running water  
To-morrow to be crossed, however deep;  
This is no river of the dead or Lethe,  
To-night we sleep  
On the banks of Rubicon—the die is cast;  
There will be time to audit  
The accounts later, there will be sunlight later  
And the equation will come out at last.



## EPILOGUE TO ICELAND

*for W. H. Auden*

by LOUIS MACNEICE

Now the winter nights begin  
Lonely comfort walls me in;  
So before the memory slip  
I review our Iceland trip—

Not for me romantic nor  
Idyll on a mythic shore  
But a fancy turn, you know,  
Sandwiched in a braver show.

Down in Europe Seville fell,  
Nations germinating hell,  
The Olympic games were run—  
Spots upon the Aryan sun.

And the don in me set forth  
How the landscape of the north  
Had educed the saga style  
Plodding forward mile by mile.

And the don in you replied  
That the North begins inside,  
Our ascetic guts require  
Breathers from the Latin fire.

So although no ghost was scotched  
We were happy while we watched  
Ravens from their walls of shale  
Cruise around the rotting whale,

Watched the sulphur basin boil,  
Loops of steam uncoil and coil,  
While the valley fades away  
To a sketch of Judgment Day.

So we rode and joked and smoked  
With no miracles evoked,

With no levitations won  
In the thin unreal sun;

In that island never found  
Visions blossom from the ground,  
No conversions like St. Paul,  
No great happenings at all.

Holidays should be like this,  
Free from over-emphasis,  
Time for soul to stretch and spit  
Before the world comes back on it,

Before the chimneys row on row  
Sneer in smoke, "We told you so"  
And the fog-bound sirens call  
Ruin to the long sea-wall.

Rows of books around me stand,  
Fence me round on either hand;  
Through that forest of dead words  
I would hunt the living birds—

Great black birds that fly alone  
Slowly through a land of stone,  
And the gulls who weave a free  
Quilt of rhythm on the sea.

Here in Hampstead I sit late  
Nights which no one shares and wait  
For the phone to ring or for  
Unknown angels at the door;

Better were the northern skies  
Than this desert in disguise—  
Rugs and cushions and the long  
Mirror which repeats the song.

From *Poems* by Louis MacNeice. Copyright, 1939, by the Modern Library, Inc. Reprinted by permission of Random House, Inc.

*V-Letter to Karl Shapiro in Australia*

For the litany of doubt  
From these walls comes breathing out  
Till the room becomes a pit  
Humming with the fear of it

With the fear of loneliness  
And uncommunicableness;  
All the wires are cut, my friends  
Live beyond the severed ends.

So I write these lines for you'  
Who have felt the death-wish too,  
'But your lust for life prevails—  
Drinking coffee, telling tales.

Our prerogatives as men  
Will be canceled who knows when;  
Still I drink your health before  
The gun-butt raps upon the door.

(1936)

V-LETTER TO KARL SHAPIRO IN AUSTRALIA

by SELDEN RODMAN

Karl, from your beachhead on that hollow island  
Under the world's waist, with its eager people  
Whose past is yesterday, and who, like us,  
Quarry the future out of hard sensation—  
Tell me the score: Are men more nearly brothers  
Under an iron heaven? Is the heart  
"Made great with shot"—or hard? We soldiers, Karl,  
Are lonely men who cannot be alone.  
Is Superman still our hero? Or does war,  
The inglorious kind, make ranks and races one?

You who have seen the volcanic islands smoke  
Unnatural thunder, the golden rivers run  
Red from no sunset through the shattered palms,  
And could not tell the savage in the rainforest  
That civilization was this, but not this only—  
Tell me, and tell the rest of us who believe  
Against all signs; that something can be done  
To stop the meaningless cycle Marx foresaw,  
What faith sustains—or whether a second time  
A generation of cynics must be born.

Karl, is America the land of promise  
The poets hope, the politicians roar  
And the radio builds its sordid sales upon?  
In crowded camp-towns, hostile to the shame  
Of pitiful, unappeasable desire;

From *The New Republic*, June 14, 1943. Reprinted by permission of Mr. Rodman and the editors.

## *The Individual in a World Society*

In the loud boredom of a thousand barracks  
From mammoth Bragg to bonewhite Pensacola,  
Jim-crow Huachuca, or this urban fort  
Sheltered from politics by its G. I. campus,  
Hope is quiescent: neither love nor hate,  
Vision of world state nor immaculate village  
Troubles our consciences. We train and wait.

If this were all, Karl, O if this were all  
I would not write this, but instead compose  
The kind of hieroglyph that was once the fashion,  
Abstract of words, incestuous riddle: proof  
That Art shored up one soul against the world's ruin.  
But it is not all. The freedom we once squandered  
Like debased currency, is being found  
In lack of freedom; discipline is put on  
Not like a habit, but a makeshift, proudly.  
America, which died of our neglect,  
Out of our sufferings can be reborn.  
Distance unites us. War engenders love  
No less than hate: the edge of what we are  
Tuned to a prop's pitch on that terrible thinness.

## NEW GUINEA LETTER

by KARL J. SHAPIRO

Selden: your April poem in hand  
Reduced four times in size and fanned  
Ten thousand miles to a savage land,  
This miniature I hope received  
In the graceful attitude conceived,  
Good friendship thought out and believed.  
I'm not too cocksure of my grip;  
I need some meter that won't trip,  
More vision, and much less censorship.  
But take this effort for what it means  
To you, a group of warlike scenes,  
A gesture, a letter, or a row of beans.  
A gremlin whispers in my ear,  
"You're rather lucky to be here;  
Think what it means to your career."

I push the creature, I push him hard;  
He thinks he's caught me off my guard.  
No, I am not your New Guinea bard,  
Not half heroic as you imply  
But anonymous like the other guy,  
Doing my duty, wondering why.

"Are men more nearly brothers?" This  
Asks for inspired synthesis.  
Question declined, but from my tent  
Hot with rank vegetable scent,  
Where dark inexorable green  
Conceals me in an unfriendly screen  
I offer this: our old bromide  
That history repeats, is wide

From *The New Republic*, July 12, 1943. Reprinted by permission of Mr. Shapiro and the editors.

## *American Letter*

Of the mark. I'd rather think we move  
Generally forward, not in a groove  
But eccentrically like Moses' band  
Threading its road to the Promised Land  
(Which venture failing—this is my clue—  
The old gave way and supplied the new).  
And war does not cleanse, fear isn't canny,  
If I may differ with Orphan Annie,  
And Superman never was our god  
But a kind of superior flying clod.  
The ads show a future minus the pain,  
Dad coming home in a Ford airplane,  
No unemployment, scientific sex,  
The salesman our Emperor Rex,  
Tennyson's fudge, the overflowing cup . . .  
Give me a future you can't dream up,  
Men as they are, as they were begun  
With a nice right emphasis on Number  
One.

Keep to the Left but if it gets hectic  
Take a powder on Papa and the dialectic.  
Each nation has a nose, but international  
man  
We'd better put down as Also Ran.

Since one of my kinder critics throws a  
Bouquet to me by way of Spinoza,

Let me add this: I want to go home  
To the gas-station age and Capitol Dome.  
I'm an amateur, would like to find my  
size  
In a shaving-mirror and my wife's blue  
eyes,  
Get a Guggenheim grant and a Chevrolet  
And write about Akron and Santa Fe.  
The above you'll think is a sorry boast,  
Suitable for Elk or The Satevepost.  
Look, Selden, let's not follow the gleam;  
It's dynamite now to try to dream.  
I'm sorry. I'm letting you down I know,  
But I'm disappointing myself also.

My visions are mine. Since I began  
I've wanted to be a private man,  
Pale in winter, in the summer tan.  
I want to retrace my steps and find  
The start of the maze within my mind,  
The exquisite pattern of mankind.  
Quiet I want to grace my page,  
Whole toleration for a gauge  
To improve the manners of our age;  
And some day when the skies are fine  
And seas have lost their incarnadine,  
Dinner with you, your wife and mine.

## AMERICAN LETTER

*for Gerald Murphy*

*by* ARCHIBALD MACLEISH

The wind is east but the hot weather continues,  
Blue and no clouds, the sound of the leaves thin,  
Dry like the rustling of paper, scored across  
With the slate-shrill screech of the locusts.

The tossing of  
Pines is the low sound. In the wind's running  
The wild carrots smell of the burning sun.  
Why should I think of the dolphins at Capo di Mele?

The selection from Archibald MacLeish's *Poems 1924-1933* is used by permission of the publishers, Houghton Mifflin Company.

### *The Individual in a World Society*

Why should I see in my mind the taut sail  
And the hill over St.-Tropez and your hand on the tiller?  
Why should my heart be troubled with palms still?  
I am neither a sold boy nor a Chinese official  
Sent to sicken in Pa for some Lo-Yang dish.  
This is my own land, my sky, my mountain:  
This—not the humming pines and the surf and the sound  
At the Ferme Blanche, nor Port Cros in the dusk and the harbor  
Floating the motionless ship and the sea-drowned star.  
I am neither Po Chü-i nor another after  
Far from home, in a strange land, daft  
For the talk of his own sort and the taste of his lettuces.  
This land is my native land. And yet  
I am sick for home for the red roofs and the olives,  
And the foreign words and the smell of the sea fall.  
How can a wise man have two countries?  
How can a man have the earth and the wind and want  
A land far off, alien, smelling of palm-trees  
And the yellow gorse at noon in the long calms?

It is a strange thing—to be an American.  
Neither an old house it is with the air  
Tasting of hung herbs and the sun returning  
Year after year to the same door and the churn  
Making the same sound in the cool of the kitchen  
Mother to son's wife, and the place to sit  
Marked in the dusk by the worn stone at the wellhead—  
That—nor the eyes like each other's eyes and the skull  
Shaped to the same fault and the hands' sameness.  
Neither a place it is nor a blood name.  
America is West and the wind blowing.  
America is a great word and the snow,  
A way, a white bird, the rain falling,  
A shining thing in the mind and the gulls' call.  
America is neither a land nor a people,  
A word's shape it is, a wind's sweep—  
America is alone: many together,  
Many of one mouth, of one breath,  
Dressed as one—and none brothers among them:  
Only the taught speech and the aped tongue.  
America is alone and the gulls calling.

It is a strange thing to be an American.  
It is strange to live on the high world in the stare  
Of the naked sun and the stars as our bones live.  
Men in the old lands housed by their rivers.

## *American Letter*

They built their towns in the vales in the earth's shelter.  
We first inhabit the world. We dwell  
On the half earth, on the open curve of a continent.  
Sea is divided from sea by the day-fall. The dawn  
Rides the low east with us many hours;  
First are the capes, then are the shorelands, now  
The blue Appalachians faint at the day rise;  
The willows shudder with light on the long Ohio:  
The Lakes scatter the low sun: the prairies  
Slide out of dark: in the eddy of clean air  
• The smoke goes up from the high plains of Wyoming:  
The steep Sierras arise: the struck foam  
Flames at the wind's heel on the far Pacific.  
Already the noon leans to the eastern cliff:  
The elms darken the door and the dust-heavy lilacs.

It is strange to sleep in the bare stars and to die  
On an open land where few bury before us:  
(From the new earth the dead return no more.)  
It is strange to be born of no race and no people.  
In the old lands they are many together. They keep  
The wise past and the words spoken in common.  
They remember the dead with their hands, their mouths dumb.  
They answer each other with two words in their meeting.  
They live together in small things. They eat  
The same dish, their drink is the same and their proverbs.  
Their youth is like. They are like in their ways of love.  
They are many men. There are always others beside them.  
Here it is one man and another and wide  
On the darkening hills the faint smoke of the houses.  
Here it is one man and the wind in the boughs.

Therefore our hearts are sick for the south water.  
The smell of the gorse comes back to our night thought.  
We are sick at heart for the red roofs and the olives;  
We are sick at heart for the voice and the footfall. . .

Therefore we will not go though the sea call us.

This, this is our land, this is our people,  
This that is neither a land nor a race. We must reap  
The wind here in the grass for our soul's harvest:  
Here we must eat our salt or our bones starve.  
Here we must live or live only as shadows.  
This is our race, we that have none, that have had  
Neither the old walls nor the voices around us,

## *The Individual in a World Society*

This is our land, this is our ancient ground—  
The raw earth, the mixed bloods and the strangers,  
The different eyes, the wind, and the heart's change.  
These we will not leave though the old call us.  
This is our country-earth, our blood, our kind.  
Here we will live our years till the earth blind us—  
The wind blows from the east. The leaves fall.  
Far off in the pines a jay rises.  
The wind smells of haze and the wild ripe apples.

I think of the masts at Cette and the sweet rain.

## MEN

*(On a phrase of Apollinaire)*

by ARCHIBALD MACLEISH

Our history is grave noble and tragic  
We trusted the look of the sun on the green leaves  
We built our towns of stone with enduring ornaments  
We worked the hard flint for basins of water

We believed in the feel of the earth under us  
We planted corn grapes apple-trees rhubarb  
Nevertheless we knew others had died  
Everything we have done has been faithful and dangerous

We believed in the promises made by the brows of women  
We begot children at night in the warm wool  
We comforted those who wept in fear on our shoulders  
Those who comforted us had themselves vanished

We fought at the dikes in the bright sun for the pride of it  
We beat drums and marched with music and laughter  
We were drunk and lay with our fine dreams in the straw  
We saw the stars through the hair of lewd women

Our history is grave noble and tragic  
Many of us have died and are not remembered  
Many cities are gone and their channels broken  
We have lived a long time in this land and with honor

The selection from Archibald MacLeish's *Poems 1924-1933* is used by permission of the publishers, Houghton Mifflin Company.

# SPEECH TO THOSE WHO SAY COMRADE

by ARCHIBALD MACLEISH

The brotherhood is not by the blood certainly:  
But neither are men brothers by speech—by saying so:  
Men are brothers by life lived and are hurt for it:

Hunger and hurt are the great begetters of brotherhood:  
Humiliation has gotten much love:  
Danger I say is the nobler father and mother:

Those are as brothers whose bodies have shared fear  
Or shared harm or shared hurt or indignity.  
Why are the old soldiers brothers and nearest?

For this: with their minds they go over the sea a little  
And find themselves in their youth again as they were in  
Soissons and Meaux and at Ypres and those cities:

A French loaf and the girls with their eyelids painted  
Bring back to aging and lonely men  
Their twentieth year and the metal odor of danger:

It is this in life which of all things is tenderest—  
To remember together with the unknown men the days  
Common also to them and perils ended:

It is this which makes of many a generation—  
A wave of men who having the same years  
Have in common the same dead and the changes.

The solitary and unshared experience  
Dies of itself like the violations of love  
Or lives on as the dead live eerily.

The unshared and single man must cover his  
Loneliness as a girl her shame for the way of  
Life is neither by one man nor by suffering.

Who are the born brothers in truth? The puddlers  
Scorched by the same flame in the same foundries:  
Those who have spit on the same boards with the blood in it:

From *Public Speech*, copyright, 1936, by Archibald MacLeish, and reprinted by permission of  
Rinehart & Company, Inc., publishers.



## *The Individual in a World Society*

Ridden the same rivers with green logs:  
Fought the police in the parks of the same cities:  
Grinned for the same blows: the same flogging:

Veterans out of the same ships—factories—  
Expeditions for fame: the founders of continents:  
Those that hid in Geneva a time back:

Those that have hidden and hunted and all such—  
Fought together: labored together: they carry the  
Common look like a card and they pass touching.

Brotherhood! No word said can make you brothers!  
Brotherhood only the brave earn and by danger or  
Harm or by bearing hurt and by no other

Brotherhood here in the strange world is the rich and  
Rarest giving of life and the most valued:  
Not to be had for a word or a week's wishing.

## AMERICA WAS PROMISES

*by* ARCHIBALD MACLEISH

Who is the voyager in these leaves?  
Who is the traveler in this journey  
Deciphers the revolving night: receives  
The signal from the light returning?

America was promises to whom?

East were the  
Dead kings and the remembered sepulchres:  
West was the grass.

The groves of the oaks were at evening.

Eastward are the nights where we have slept.

And we move on: we move down:  
With the first light we push forward:  
We descend from the past as a wandering people from mountains.  
We cross into the day to be discovered.  
The dead are left where they fall—at dark  
At night late under the coverlets.

Archibald MacLeish, *America Was Promises*. Reprinted by permission of the publishers, Duell, Sloan & Pearce, Inc.

### *America Was Promises*

We mark the place with the shape of our teeth on our fingers.  
The room is left as it was: the love

Who is the traveler in these leaves these  
Annual waters and beside the doors  
Jonquils: then the rose: the eaves  
Heaping the thunder up: the mornings  
Opening on like great valleys  
Never till now approached: the familiar trees  
Far off: distant with the future:  
The hollyhocks beyond the afternoons:  
The butterflies over the ripening fruit on the balconies:  
And all beautiful  
All before us

America was always promises.  
From the first voyage and the first ship there were promises—  
'the tropic bird which does not sleep at sea'  
'the great mass of dark heavy clouds which is a sign'  
'the drizzle of rain without wind which is a sure sign'  
'the whale which is an indication'  
'the stick appearing to be carved with iron'  
'the stalk loaded with roseberries'  
'and all these signs were from the west'  
'and all night heard birds passing.'

Who is the voyager on these coasts?  
Who is traveler in these waters  
Expects the future as a shore: foresees  
Like Indies to the west the ending—he  
The rumor of the surf intends?

America was promises—to whom?

Jefferson knew:  
Declared it before God and before history:  
Declares it still in the remembering tomb.  
The promises were Man's: the land was his—  
Man endowed by his Creator:  
Earnest in love: perfectible by reason:  
Just and perceiving justice: his natural nature  
Clear and sweet at the source as springs in trees are.  
It was Man the promise contemplated.  
The times had chosen Man: no other:

## *The Individual in a World Society*

Bloom on his face of every future:  
Brother of stars and of all travelers:  
Brother of time and of all mysteries:  
Brother of grass also: of fruit trees.  
It was Man who had been promised: who should have.  
Man was to ride from the Tidewater: over the Gap:  
West and South with the water: taking the book with him:  
Taking the wheat seed: corn seed: pip of apple:  
Building liberty a farmyard wide  
Breeding for useful labor: for good looks:  
For husbandry: humanity: for pride—  
Practising self-respect and common decency.

And Man turned into men in Philadelphia  
Practising prudence on a long-term lease:  
Building liberty to fit the parlor:  
Bred for crystal on the frontroom shelves:  
Just and perceiving justice by the dollar:  
Patriotic with the bonds at par  
(And their children's children brag of their deeds for the Colonies).  
Man rode up from the Tidewater: over the Gap:  
Turned into men: turned into two-day settlers:  
Lawyers with the land-grants in their caps:  
Coon-skin voters wanting theirs and getting it.

Turned the promises to capital: invested it.

America was always promises:  
'the wheel like a sun as big as a cart wheel  
with many sorts of pictures on it  
the whole of fine gold'

'twenty golden ducks  
beautifully worked and very natural looking  
and some like dogs of the kind they keep'

And they waved us west from the dunes: they cried out  
Colua! Colua!  
Mexico! Mexico! . . . Colua!

America was promises to whom?

Old Man Adams knew. He told us—  
An aristocracy of compound interest  
Hereditary through the common stock!  
We'd have one sure before the mare was older.  
"The first want of every man was his dinner:

## *America Was Promises*

The second his girl." Kings were by the pocket.  
Wealth made blood made wealth made blood made wealthy.  
Enlightened selfishness gave lasting light.  
Winners bred grandsons: losers only bred!

And the Aristocracy of politic selfishness  
Bought the land up: bought the towns: the sites:  
The goods: the government: the people. Bled them.  
Sold them. Kept the profit. Lost itself.

The Aristocracy of Wealth and Talents  
Turned its talents into wealth and lost them.  
Turned enlightened selfishness to wealth.  
Turned self-interest into bankbooks: balanced them.  
Bred out: bred to fools: to hostlers:  
Card sharps: well dressed women: dancefloor doublers.  
The Aristocracy of Wealth and Talents  
Sold its talents: bought the public notice:  
Drank in public: went to bed in public:  
Patronized the arts in public: pall'd with  
Public authors public beauties: posed in  
Public postures for the public page.  
The Aristocracy of Wealth and Talents  
Withered of talent and ashamed of wealth  
Bred to sonsinlaw: insane relations:  
Girls with open secrets: sailors' Galahads:  
Prurient virgins with the tales to tell:  
Women with dead wombs and living wishes.

The Aristocracy of Wealth and Talents  
Moved out: settled on the Continent:  
Sat beside the water at Rapallo:  
Died in a rented house: unwept: unhonored.

And the child says I see the lightning on you.

The weed between the railroad tracks  
Tasting of sweat: tasting of poverty:  
The bitter and pure taste where the hawk hovers:  
Native as the deer bone in the sand

O my America for whom?

For whom the promises? For whom the river  
"It flows west! Look at the ripple of it!"

## *The Individual in a World Society*

The grass "So that it was wonderful to see  
And endless without end with wind wonderful!"  
The Great Lakes: landless as oceans: their beaches  
Coarse sand: clean gravel: pebbles:  
Their bluffs smelling of sunflowers: smelling of surf:  
Of fresh water: of wild sunflowers . . . wilderness.  
For whom the evening mountains on the sky:  
The night wind from the west: the moon descending?

Tom Paine knew.  
Tom Paine knew the People.  
The promises were spoken to the People.  
History was voyages toward the People.  
Americas were landfalls of the People.  
Stars and expectations were the signals of the People.

Whatever was truly built the People had built it.  
Whatever was taken down they had taken down.  
Whatever was worn they had worn—ax-handles: fiddle-bows:  
Sills of doorways: names for children: for mountains.  
Whatever was long forgotten they had forgotten—  
Fame of the great: names of the rich and their mottos.  
The People had the promises: they'd keep them.  
They waited their time in the world: they had wise sayings.  
They counted out their time by day to day.  
They counted it out day after day into history.  
They had time and to spare in the spill of their big fists.  
They had all the time there was like a handful of wheat seed.  
When the time came they would speak and the rest would listen.

And the time came and the People did not speak.

The time came: the time comes: the speakers  
Come and these who speak are not the People.

These who speak with gunstocks at the doors:  
These the coarse ambitious priest  
Leads by the bloody fingers forward:  
These who reach with stiffened arm to touch  
What none who took dared touch before:  
These who touch the truth are not the People.

These the savage fables of the time  
Lick at the fingers as a bitch will waked at morning:  
These who teach the lie are not the People.

The time came: the time comes

## America Was Promises

Comes and to whom? To these? Was it for these  
The surf was secret on the new-found shore?  
Was it for these the branch was on the water?—  
These whom all the years were toward  
The golden images the clouds the mountains?

Never before: never in any summer:  
Never were days so generous: stars so mild:  
Even in old men's talk or in books or remembering  
Far back in a gone childhood  
Or farther still to the light where Homer wanders—  
The air all lucid with the solemn blue  
That hills take at the distance beyond change. . . .  
That time takes also at the distances.

Never were there promises as now:  
 Never was green deeper: earth warmer:  
 Light more beautiful to see: the sound of  
 Water lovelier: the many forms of  
 Leaves: stones: clouds: beasts: shadows  
 Clearer more admirable or the faces  
 More like answering faces or the hands  
 Quicker: more brotherly:

the aching taste of

Time more salt upon the tongue: more human  
 Never in any summer: and to whom?

At dusk: by street lights: in the rooms we ask this.

We do not ask for Truth now from John Adams.  
We do not ask for Tongues from Thomas Jefferson.  
We do not ask for Justice from Tom Paine.  
We ask for answers.

**And there is an answer.**

There is Spain Austria Poland China Bohemia.  
There are dead men in the pits in all those countries.  
Their mouths are silent but they speak. They say  
*"The promises are theirs who take them."*

Listen! Brothers! Generation!  
Listen! You have heard these words. Believe it!  
Believe the promises are theirs who take them!

## *The Individual in a World Society*

Believe unless we take them for ourselves  
Others will take them for the use of others!

Believe unless we take them for ourselves  
All of us: one here: another there:  
Men not Man: people not the People:  
Hands: mouths: arms: eyes: not syllables—  
Believe unless we take them for ourselves  
Others will take them: not for us: for others!

Believe unless we take them for ourselves  
Now: soon: by the clock: before tomorrow:  
Others will take them: not for now: for longer!

Listen! Brothers! Generation!  
Companions of leaves: of the sun: of the slow evenings:  
Companions of the many days: of all of them:  
Listen! Believe the speaking dead! Believe  
The journey is our journey. O believe  
The signals were to us: the signs: the birds by  
Night: the breaking surf.

Believe  
America is promises to  
Take!

America is promises to  
Us  
To take them  
Brutally  
With love but  
Take them.

O believe this!

## TWO TRAMPS IN MUD TIME

*by* ROBERT FROST

Out of the mud two strangers came	I knew pretty well why he dropped behind
And caught me splitting wood in the yard.	And let the other go on a way.
And one of them put me off my aim	I knew pretty well what he had in mind:
By hailing cheerily 'Hit them hard!'	He wanted to take my job for pay.

From Robert Frost, *Collected Poems*, Henry Holt and Company, Inc.

## *Two Tramps in Mud Time*

Good blocks of beech it was I split,  
As large around as the chopping block;  
And every piece I squarely hit  
Fell splinterless as a cloven rock.  
The blows that a life of self-control  
Spares to strike for the common good  
That day, giving a loose to my soul,  
I spent on the unimportant wood.

The sun was warm but the wind was  
chill.

You know how it is with an April day  
When the sun is out and the wind is still,  
You're one month on in the middle of  
May.

But if you so much as dare to speak,  
A cloud comes over the sunlit arch,  
A wind comes off a frozen peak,  
And you're two months back in the mid-  
dle of March.

A bluebird comes tenderly up to alight  
And fronts the wind to unruffle a plume,  
His song so pitched as not to excite  
A single flower as yet to bloom.  
It is snowing a flake: and he half knew  
Winter was only playing possum.  
Except in color he isn't blue,  
But he wouldn't advise a thing to blossom.

The water for which we may have to look  
In summertime with a witching-wand,  
In every wheelrut's now a brook,  
In every print of a hoof a pond.  
Be glad of water, but don't forget  
The lurking frost in the earth beneath  
That will steal forth after the sun is set  
And show on the water its crystal teeth.

The time when most I loved my task  
These two must make me love it more  
By coming with what they came to ask.  
You'd think I never had felt before  
The weight of an ax-head poised aloft,  
The grip on earth of outspread feet,  
The life of muscles rocking soft  
And smooth and moist in vernal heat.

Out of the woods two hulking tramps  
(From sleeping God knows where last  
night,  
But not long since in the lumber camps).  
They thought all chopping was theirs of  
right.

Men of the woods and lumberjacks,  
They judged me by their appropriate tool.  
Except as a fellow handled an ax,  
They had no way of knowing a fool.

Nothing on either side was said.  
They knew they had but to stay their stay  
And all their logic would fill my head:  
As that I had no right to play  
With what was another man's work for  
gain.  
My right might be love but theirs was  
need.

And where the two exist in twain  
Theirs was the better right—agreed.

But yield who will to their separation,  
My object in living is to unite  
My avocation and my vocation  
As my two eyes make one in sight.  
Only where love and need are one,  
And the work is play for mortal stakes,  
Is the deed ever really done  
For Heaven and the future's sakes.



## DEPARTMENTAL

by ROBERT FROST

An ant on the table cloth  
Ran into a dormant moth  
Of many times his size.  
He showed not the least surprise.  
His business wasn't with such.  
He gave it scarcely a touch,  
And was off on his duty run.  
Yet if he encountered one  
Of the hive's enquiry squad  
Whose work is to find out God  
And the nature of time and space,  
He would put him onto the case.  
Ants are a curious race;  
One crossing with hurried tread  
The body of one of their dead  
Isn't given a moment's arrest—  
Seems not even impressed.  
But he no doubt reports to any  
With whom he crosses antennae,  
And they no doubt report  
To the higher up at court.

Then word goes forth in Formic:  
"Death's come to Jerry McCormic,  
Our selfless forager Jerry.  
Will the special Janizary  
Whose office it is to bury  
The dead of the commissary  
Go bring him home to his people.  
Lay him in state on a sepal.  
Wrap him for shroud in a petal.  
Embalm him with ichor of nettle.  
This is the word of your Queen."  
And presently on the scene  
Appears a solemn mortician;  
And taking formal position  
With feelers calmly atwiddle,  
Seizes the dead by the middle,  
And heaving him high in the air,  
Carries him out of there.  
No one stands round to stare.  
It is nobody else's affair.  
It couldn't be called ungentle.  
But how thoroughly departmental.

From Robert Frost, *Collected Poems*, Henry Holt and Company, Inc.

## from THE PEOPLE, YES

by CARL SANDBURG

28

In the days of the cockade and the brass pistol  
Fear of the people brought the debtors' jail.  
The creditor said, "Pay me or go to prison,"  
And men lacking property lacked ballots and citizenship.  
Into the Constitution of the United States they wrote a fear  
In the form of "checks and balances," "proper restraints"  
On the people so whimsical and changeable,  
So variable in mood and weather.

From *The People, Yes* by Carl Sandburg. Copyright, 1936, by Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc.

## *The People, Yes*

Lights of tallow candles fell on lawbooks by night.  
The woolspun clothes came from sheep near by.  
Men of "solid substance" wore velvet knickerbockers  
And shared snuff with one another in greetings.  
One of these made a name for himself with saying  
You could never tell what was coming next from the people:  
"Your people, sir, your people is a great beast,"  
Speaking for those afraid of the people,  
Afraid of sudden massed action of the people,  
The people being irresponsible with torch, gun and rope,  
The people being a child with fire and loose hardware,  
The people listening to leather-lunged stump orators  
Crying the rich get richer, the poor poorer, and why?  
The people undependable as prairie rivers in floodtime,  
The people uncertain as lights on the face of the sea  
Wherefore high and first of all he would write  
God, the Constitution, Property Rights, the Army and the Police,  
After these the rights of the people.

The meaning was:

The people having nothing to lose take chances.  
The people having nothing to take care of are careless.  
The people lacking property are slack about property.  
Having no taxes to pay how can they consider taxes?  
"And the poor have they not themselves to blame for their poverty?"

Those who have must take care of those who have not  
Even though in the providence of events some of  
Those who now have *not* once *had* and what they had *then*  
Was taken away from them by those who *now have*.

Naughts are naughts into riffraff.  
Nothing plus nothing equals nothing.  
Scum is scum and dregs are dregs.  
"This flotsam and jetsam."

There is the House of Have and the House of Have-Not.  
God named the Haves as caretakers of the Have-Nots.  
This shepherding is a divine decree laid on the betters.  
"And surely you know when you are among your betters?"

This and a lot else was in the meaning:  
"Your people, sir, is a great beast."  
The testament came with deliberation  
Cold as ice, warm as blood,

## *The Individual in a World Society*

Hard as a steel hand steel-gloved,  
A steel foot steel-shod  
For contact with another testament:  
"All men are born free and equal."

The cow content to give milk and calves,  
The plug work-horse plowing from dawn till dark,  
The mule lashed with a blacksnake when balking—  
Fed and sheltered—or maybe not—all depending—  
A pet monkey leaping for nuts thrown to it,  
A parrot ready to prattle your words  
And repeat after you your favorite oaths—  
Or a nameless monster to be guarded and tended  
Against temper and flashes of retaliation—  
These were the background symbols:  
"Your people, sir, is a great beast."

29

The people, yes—  
Born with bones and heart fused in deep and violent secrets  
Mixed from a bowl of sky blue dreams and sea slime facts—  
A seething of saints and sinners, toilers, loafers, oxen, apes  
In a womb of superstition, faith, genius, crime, sacrifice—  
The one and only source of armies, navies, work-gangs,  
The living flowing breath of the history of nations,  
Of the little Family of Man hugging the little ball of Earth,  
And a long hall of mirrors, straight, convex and concave,  
Moving and endless with scrolls of the living,  
Shimmering with phantoms flung from the past,  
Shot over with lights of babies to come, not yet here.

The honorable orators, the gazettes of thunder,  
The tycoons, big shots and dictators,  
Flicker in the mirrors a few moments  
And fade through the glass of death  
For discussion in an autocracy of worms  
While the rootholds of the earth nourish the majestic people  
And the new generations with names never heard of  
Plow deep in broken drums and shoot craps for old crowns,  
Shouting unimagined shibboleths and slogans,  
Tracing their heels in moth-eaten insignia of bawdy leaders—  
Piling revolt on revolt across night valleys,  
Letting loose insurrections, uprisings, strikes,  
Marches, mass-meetings, banners, declared resolves,

Plodding in a somnambulism of fog and rain  
Till a given moment exploded by long-prepared events—  
Then again the overthrow of an old order  
And the trials of another new authority  
And death and taxes, crops and droughts,  
Chinch bugs, grasshoppers, corn borers, boll weevils,  
Top soil farms blown away in a dust and wind,  
Inexorable rains carrying off rich loam,  
And mortgages, house rent, groceries,  
Jobs, pay cuts, layoffs, relief  
And passion and poverty and crime  
And the paradoxes not yet resolved  
Of the shrewd and elusive proverbs,  
The have-you-heard yarns,  
The listen-to-this anecdote  
Made by the people out of the roots of the earth,  
Out of dirt, barns, workshops, time-tables,  
Out of lumberjack payday jamborees,  
Out of joybells and headaches the day after,  
Out of births, weddings, accidents,  
Out of wars, laws, promises, betrayals,  
Out of mists of the lost and anonymous,  
Out of plain living, early rising and spare belongings:

30

We'll see what we'll see.

Time is a great teacher.

Today me and tomorrow maybe you.

This old anvil laughs at many broken hammers.

What is bitter to stand against today may be sweet to remember tomorrow.

Fine words butter no parsnips. Moonlight dries no mittens.

Whether the stone bumps the jug or the jug bumps the stone it is bad for the jug.

One hand washes the other and both wash the face.

Better leave the child's nose dirty than wring it off.

We all belong to the same big family and have the same smell.

Handling honey, tar or dung some of it sticks to the fingers.

The liar comes to believe his own lies.

He who burns himself must sit on the blisters.

God alone understands fools.

The dumb mother understands the dumb child.

To work hard, to live hard, to die hard, and then to go to hell after all would be too damned hard.

You can fool all the people part of the time and part of the people all the time but you can't fool all of the people all of the time.

It takes all kinds of people to make a world.

## *The Individual in a World Society*

What is bred in the bone will tell.  
Between the inbreds and the cross-breeds the argument goes on:  
You can breed them up as easy as you can breed them down.  
"I don't know who my ancestors were," said a mongrel, "but we've been descending for a long time."  
"My ancestors," said the Cherokee-blooded Oklahoman, "didn't come over in the *Mayflower* but we was there to meet the boat."  
"Why," said the Denver Irish policeman as he arrested a Pawnee Indian I.W.W. soapboxer, "why don't you go back where you came from?"

An expert is only a damned fool a long ways from home.  
You're either a thoroughbred, a scrub, or an in-between.  
Speed is born with the foal—sometimes.  
Always some dark horse never heard of before is coming under the wire a winner.  
A thoroughbred always wins against a scrub, though you never know for sure: even thoroughbreds have their off days: new blood tells: the wornout thoroughbreds lose to the fast young scrubs.

There is a luck of faces and bloods  
Comes to a child and touches it.  
It comes like a bird never seen.  
It goes like a bird never handled.  
There are little mothers hear the bird,  
Feel the flitting of wings never seen,  
And the touch of the givers of luck,  
The bringers of faces and bloods.

86

The people, yes, the people,  
Until the people are taken care of one way or another,  
Until the people are solved somehow for the day and hour,  
Until then one hears "Yes but the people what about the people?"  
Sometimes as though the people is a child to be pleased or fed  
Or again a hoodlum you have to be tough with  
And seldom as though the people is a caldron and a reservoir  
Of the human reserves that shape history,  
The river of welcome wherein the broken First Families fade,  
The great pool wherein wornout breeds and clans drop for restorative silence.

## *The People, Yes*

Fire, chaos, shadows,  
Events trickling from a thin line of flame  
On into cries and combustions never expected:  
The people have the element of surprise.

Where are the kings today?  
What has become of their solid and fastened thrones?  
Who are the temporary puppets holding sway while anything,  
"God only knows what," waits around a corner, sits in the shadows and holds  
an ax, waiting for the appointed hour?

"The czar has eight million men with guns and bayonets.

"Nothing can happen to the czar.

"The czar is the voice of God and shall live forever.

"Turn and look at the forest of steel and cannon

"Where the czar is guarded by eight million soldiers.

"Nothing can happen to the czar."

They said that for years and in the summer of 1914  
In the Year of Our Lord Nineteen Hundred and Fourteen  
As a portent and an assurance they said with owl faces:

"Nothing can happen to the czar."

Yet the czar and his bodyguard of eight million vanished  
And the czar stood in a cellar before a little firing squad  
And the command of fire was given  
And the czar stepped into regions of mist and ice  
The czar traveled into an ethereal uncharted siberia  
While two kaisers also vanished from thrones  
Ancient and established in blood and iron—  
Two kaisers backed by ten million bayonets  
Had their crowns in a gutter, their palaces mobbed.

In fire, chaos, shadows,  
In hurricanes beyond foretelling of probabilities,  
In the shove and whirl of unforeseen combustions

The people, yes, the people,  
Move eternally in the elements of surprise,  
Changing from hammer to bayonet and back to hammer,  
The hallelujah chorus forever shifting its star soloists.

Always the storm of propaganda blows.  
Buy a paper. Read a book. Start the radio.  
Listen in the railroad car, in the bus,  
Go to church, to a movie, to a saloon.  
And always the breezes of personal opinion

*"The Individual in a World Society"*

are blowing mixed with the doctrines  
of propaganda or the chatter of selling spiels.  
Believe this, believe that. Buy these, buy them.  
Love one-two-three, hate four-five-six.  
Remember 7-8-9, forget 10-11-12.  
Go now, don't wait, go now at once and buy  
Dada Salts Incorporated, Crazy Horse Crystals,  
for whatever ails you and if nothing ails you  
it is good for that and we are telling you  
for your own good. Whatever you are told,  
you are told it is for your own good and not  
for the special interest of those telling you.  
Planned economy is forethought and care.  
Planned economy is regimentation and tyranny.  
What do you know about planned economy  
and how did this argument get started and why?  
Let the argument go on.

The storm of propaganda blows always.  
In every air of today the germs float and hover.  
The shock and contact of ideas goes on.  
Planned economy will arrive, stand up,  
and stay a long time—or planned economy will  
take a beating and be smothered.  
The people have the say-so.  
Let the argument go on.  
Let the people listen.

Tomorrow the people say Yes or No by one question:  
"What else can be done?"

In the drive of faiths on the wind today the people know:  
"We have come far and we are going farther yet."

Who was the quiet silver-toned agitator who  
said he loved every stone of the streets of  
Boston, who was a believer in sidewalks, and  
had it, "The talk of the sidewalk today is  
the law of the land tomorrow"?

"The people," said a farmer's wife in a Minnesota country store while her husband  
was buying a new post-hole digger,  
"The people," she went on, "will stick around a long time.  
"The people run the works, only they don't know it yet—you wait and see."

Who knows the answers, the cold inviolable truth?  
And when have the paid and professional liars done else than bring wrath and fire,  
wreck and doom?

## *The People, Yes*

And how few they are who search and hesitate and say:

"I stand in this whirlpool and tell you I don't know and if I did know I would tell you and all I am doing now is to guess and I give you my guess for what it is worth as one man's guess.

"Yet I have worked out this guess for myself as nobody's yes-man and when it happens I no longer own the priceless little piece of territory under my own hat, so far gone that I can't even do my own guessing for myself,

"Then I will know I am one of the unburied dead, one of the moving walking stalking talking unburied dead."

107

The people will live on.

The learning and blundering people will live on.

They will be tricked and sold and again sold

And go back to the nourishing earth for rootholds,

The people so peculiar in renewal and comeback,

You can't laugh off their capacity to take it.

The mammoth rests between his cyclonic dramas.

The people so often sleepy, weary, enigmatic,  
is a vast huddle with many units saying:

"I earn my living.

I make enough to get by  
and it takes all my time.

If I had more time

I could do more for myself  
and maybe for others.

I could read and study

and talk things over  
and find out about things.

It takes time.

I wish I had the time."

The people is a tragic and comic two-face:  
hero and hoodlum: phantom and gorilla twist-  
ing to moan with a gargoye mouth: "They  
buy me and sell me . . . it's a game . . .  
sometime I'll break loose . . ."

Once having marched

Over the margins of animal necessity,

Over the grim line of sheer subsistence

Then man came





## *The Individual in a World Society*

To the deeper rituals of his bones,  
 To the lights lighter than any bones,  
 To the time for thinking things over,  
 To the dance, the song, the story,  
 Or the hours given over to dreaming,  
 Once having so marched.

Between the finite limitations of the five senses  
 and the endless yearnings of man for the beyond  
 the people hold to the humdrum bidding of work and food  
 while reaching out when it comes their way  
 for lights beyond the prison of the five senses,  
 for keepsakes lasting beyond any hunger or death.

This reaching is alive.

The panderers and liars have violated and smutted it.  
 Yet this reaching is alive yet  
 for lights and keepsakes.

The people know the salt of the sea  
 and the strength of the winds  
 lashing the corners of the earth.  
 The people take the earth  
 as a tomb of rest and a cradle of hope.  
 Who else speaks for the Family of Man?  
 They are in tune and step  
 with constellations of universal law.

The people is a polychrome,  
 a spectrum and a prism  
 held in a moving monolith,  
 a console organ of changing themes,  
 a clavilux of color poems

wherein the sea offers fog  
 and the fog moves off in rain  
 and the labrador sunset shortens  
 to a nocturne of clear stars  
 serene over the shot spray  
 of northern lights.

The steel mill sky is alive.  
 The fire breaks white and zigzag  
 shot on a gun-metal gloaming.  
 Man is a long time coming.  
 Man will yet win.  
 Brother may yet line up with brother:

This old anvil laughs at many broken hammers.  
 There are men who can't be bought.  
 The fireborn are at home in fire.  
 The stars make no noise.  
 You can't hinder the wind from blowing.  
 Time is a great teacher.  
 Who can live without hope?

In the darkness with a great bundle of grief  
 the people march.  
 In the night, and overhead a shovel of stars for  
 keeps, the people march:

"Where to? what next?"

# "THE HAIRY APE"

## *A Comedy of Ancient and Modern Life in Eight Scenes*

by EUGENE O'NEILL

### CHARACTERS

ROBERT SMITH, "YANK"	SECOND ENGINEER
PADDY	A GUARD
LONG	A SECRETARY OF AN ORGANIZATION
MILDRED DOUGLAS	<i>Stokers, Ladies, Gentlemen, etc.</i>
HER AUNT	

### SCENES

- SCENE I: *The firemen's forecandle of an ocean liner  
—an hour after sailing from New York.*
- SCENE II: *Section of promenade deck, two days out—morning*
- SCENE III: *The stokehole. A few minutes later.*
- SCENE IV: *Same as Scene I. Half an hour later.*
- SCENE V: *Fifth Avenue, New York. Three weeks later.*
- SCENE VI: *An island near the city. The next night.*
- SCENE VII: *In the city. About a month later.*
- SCENE VIII: *In the city. Twilight of the next day.*

### SCENE I

[*The firemen's forecandle of a transatlantic liner an hour after sailing from New York for the voyage across. Tiers of narrow, steel bunks, three deep, on all sides. An entrance in rear. Benches on the floor before the bunks. The room is crowded with men, shouting, cursing, laughing, singing—a confused, inchoate uproar swelling into a sort of unity, a meaning—the bewildered, furious, baffled defiance of a beast in a cage. Nearly all the men are drunk. Many bottles are passed from hand to hand. All are dressed in dungaree pants, heavy ugly shoes. Some wear singlets, but the majority are stripped to the waist.*

*The treatment of this scene, or of any other scene in the play, should by no means be naturalistic. The effect sought after is a cramped space in the bowels of a ship, imprisoned by white steel. The lines of bunks, the uprights supporting them, cross each other like the steel framework of a cage. The ceiling crushes down upon the men's heads. They cannot stand upright. This accentuates the natural stooping posture which shoveling coal and the resultant over-development of back and shoulder muscles have given them. The men themselves should resemble those pictures in which the appearance of Neanderthal Man is guessed at. All are*

Eugene O'Neill, *The Hairy Ape*, 1922. Copyright, 1925, by Eugene O'Neill. Reprinted by permission of Random House, Inc.

## The Individual in a World Society

hairy-chested, with long arms of tremendous power, and low, receding brows above their small, fierce, resentful eyes. All the civilized white races are represented, but except for the slight differentiation in color of hair, skin, eyes, all these men are alike.

The curtain rises on a tumult of sound. YANK is seated in the foreground. He seems broader, fiercer, more truculent, more powerful, more sure of himself than the rest. They respect his superior strength—the grudging respect of fear. Then, too, he represents to them a self-expression, the very last word in what they are, their most highly developed individual.]

VOICES. Gif me trink dere, you!  
'Ave a wet!  
Salute!  
Gesundheit!  
Skoal!  
Drunk as a lord, God stiffen you!  
Here's how!  
Luck!  
Pass back that bottle, damn you!  
Pourin' it down his neck!  
Ho, Froggy! Where the devil have you been?

*La Touraine.*

I hit him smash in yaw, py Gott!  
Jenkins—the First—he's a rotten swine—  
And the coppers nabbed him—and I run—  
I like peer better. It don't pig head gif you.

A slut, I'm sayin'! She robbed me aslape—  
To hell with 'em all!  
You're a bloody liar!  
Say dot again! [*Commotion. Two men about to fight are pulled apart.*]

No scrappin' now!

Tonight—

See who's the best man!

Bloody Dutchman!

Tonight on the for'ard square.

I'll bet on Dutchy.

He packa da wallop, I tella you!

Shut up, Wop!

No fightin', maties. We're all chums, ain't we?

[*A voice starts bawling a song.*]

"Beer, beer, glorious beer!

Fill yourselves right up to here."

YANK [*for the first time seeming to take notice of the uproar about him, turns around threateningly—in a tone of contemptuous authority*]. Choke off dat noise! Where d'yuh get dat beer stuff? Beer, hell! Beer's for goils—and Dutchmen. Me for somep'n wit a kick to it! Gimme a drink, one of youse guys. [*Several bottles are eagerly offered. He takes a tremendous gulp at one of them; then, keeping the bottle in his hand, glares belligerently at the owner, who hastens to acquiesce in this robbery by saying*] All righto, Yank. Keep it and have another. [*YANK contemptuously turns his back on the crowd again. For a second there is an embarrassed silence. Then—*]

VOICES. We must be passing the Hook. She's beginning to roll to it.

Six days in hell—and then Southampton.

Py Yesus, I vish somepody take my first vatch for me!

Gittin' seasick, Square-head?

Drink up and forget it!

What's in your bottle?

Gin.

Dot's nigger trink.

Absinthe? It's doped. You'll go off your chump, Froggy!

Cochon!

Whisky, that's the ticket!

Where's Paddy?

Going asleep.

## "The Hairy Ape"

Sing us that whisky song, Paddy. [*They all turn to an old, wizened Irishman who is dozing, very drunk, on the benches forward. His face is extremely monkey-like with all the sad, patient pathos of that animal in his small eyes.*]

Singa da song, Caruso Pat!

He's gettin' old. The drink is too much for him.

He's too drunk.

PADDY [*blinking about him, starts to his feet resentfully, swaying, holding on to the edge of a bunk*]. I'm never too drunk to sing. 'Tis only when I'm dead to the world I'd be wishful to sing at all. [*With a sort of sad contempt.*] "Whisky Johnny," ye want? A chanty, ye want? Now that's a queer wish from the ugly like of you, God help you. But no matther. [*He starts to sing in a thin, nasal, doleful tone.*]

Oh, whisky is the life of man!

Whisky! O Johnny! [*They all join in on this.*]

Oh, whisky is the life of man!

Whisky for my Johnny! [*Again chorus.*]

Oh, whisky drove my old man mad!

Whisky! O Johnny!

Oh, whisky drove my old man mad!

Whisky for my Johnny!

YANK [*again turning around scornfully*]. Aw hell! Nix on dat old sailing ship stuff! All dat bull's dead, see? And you're dead, too, yuh damned old Harp, on'y yuh don't know it. Take it easy, see. Give us a rest. Nix on de loud noise. [*With a cynical grin*] Can't youse see I'm tryin' to t'ink?

ALL [*repeating the word after him as one with the same cynical amused mock-*

*ery*]. Think! [*The chorused word has a brazen metallic quality as if their throats were phonograph horns. It is followed by a general uproar of hard, barking laughter*].

VOICES. Don't be cracking your head wit ut, Yank.

You gat headache, py yingol

One thing about it—it rhymes with drink!

Ha, ha, ha!

Drink, don't think!

Drink, don't think!

Drink, don't think!

[*A whole chorus of voices has taken up this refrain, stamping on the floor, pounding on the benches with fists.*]

YANK [*taking a gulp from his bottle—good-naturedly*]. Aw right. Can de noise. I got yuh de foist time. [*The uproar subsides. A very drunken sentimental tenor begins to sing.*]

"Far away in Canada,

Far across the sea,

There's a lass who fondly waits

Making a home for me—"

YANK [*fiercely contemptuous*]. Shut up, yuh lousy boob! Where d'yuh get dat tripe? Home? Home, hell! I'll make a home for yuh! I'll knock yuh dead. Home! T'hell wit home! Where d'yuh get dat tripe? Dis is home, see? What d'yuh want wit home? [*Proudly.*] I runned away from mine when I was a kid. On'y too glad to beat it, dat was me. Home was lickings for me, dat's all. But yuh can bet your shoit no one ain't never licked me since! Wanter try it, any of youse? Huh! I guess not. [*In a more placated but still contemptuous tone.*] Goils waitin' for yuh, huh? Aw, hell! Dat's all tripe. Dey don't wait for no one. Dey'd double-

## *The Individual in a World Society*

cross yuh for a nickel. Dey're all tarts, get me? Treat 'em rough, dat's me. To hell wit 'em. Tarts, dat's what, de whole bunch of 'em.

LONG [*very drunk, jumps on a bench excitedly, gesticulating with a bottle in his hand*]. Listen 'ere, Comrades! Yank 'ere is right. 'E says this 'ere stinkin' ship is our 'ome. And 'e says as 'ome is 'ell. And 'e's right! This is 'ell. We lives in 'ell, Comrades—and right enough we'll die in it. [*Raging.*] And who's ter blame, I arks yer? We ain't. We wasn't born this rotten way. All men is born free and ekal. That's in the bleedin' Bible, maties. But what d'they care for the Bible—them lazy, bloated swine what travels first cabin? Them's the ones. They dragged us down 'til we're on'y wage slaves in the bowels of a bloody ship, sweatin', burnin' up, eatin' coal dust! Hit's them's ter blame—the damned Capitalist clarss! [*There had been a gradual murmur of contemptuous resentment rising among the men until now he is interrupted by a storm of cat-calls, hisses, boos, hard laughter.*]

VOICES. Turn it off!

Shut up!

Sit down!

Closa da face!

Tamn fool! [*Etc.*]

YANK [*standing up and glaring at LONG*]. Sit down before I knock yuh down! [*LONG makes haste to efface himself. YANK goes on contemptuously.*] De Bible, huh? De Cap'tlist class, huh? Aw nix on dat Salvation Army-Socialist bull. Git a soapbox! Hire a hall! Come and be saved, huh? Jerk us to Jesus, huh? Aw g'wan! I've listened to lots of guys like you, see. Yuh're all wrong. Wanter know what I t'ink? Yuh ain't no good for no one. Yuh're de bunk. Yuh ain't got no noive, get me? Yuh're yellow, dat's what.

Yellow, dat's you. Say! What's dem slobs in de foist cabin got to do wit us? We're better men dan dey are, ain't we? Sure! One of us guys could clean up de whole mob wit one mit. Put one of 'em down here for one watch in de stokehole, what'd happen? Dey'd carry him off on a stretcher. Dem boids don't amount to nothin'. Dey're just baggage. Who makes dis old tub run? Ain't it us guys? Well den, we belong, don't we? We belong and dey don't. Dat's all. [*A loud chorus of approval. YANK goes on.*] As for dis bein' hell—aw, nuts! Yuh lost your noive, dat's what. Dis is a man's job, get me? It belongs. It runs dis tub. No stiffs need apply. But yuh're a stiff, see? Yuh're yellow, dat's you.

VOICES [*with a great hard pride in them*].

Righto!

A man's job!

Talk is cheap, Long.

He never could hold up his end.

Divil take him!

Yank's right. We make it go.

Py Gott, Yank say right ting!

We don't need no one cryin' over us.

Makin' speeches.

Throw him out!

Yellow!

Chuck him overboard!

I'll break his jaw for him!

[*They crowd around LONG threateningly.*]

YANK [*half good-natured again—contemptuously*]. Aw, take it easy. Leave him alone. He ain't woith a punch. Drink up. Here's how, whoever owns dis. [*He takes a long swallow from his bottle. All drink with him. In a flash all is hilarious amiability again, backslapping, loud talk, etc.*]

PADDY [*who has been sitting in a blinking, melancholy daze—suddenly cries out in a voice full of old sorrow*]. We belong

## "The Hairy Ape"

to this, you're saying? We make the ship to go, you're saying? Yerra then, that Almighty God have pity on us! [*His voice runs into the wail of a keen, he rocks back and forth on his bench. The men stare at him, startled and impressed in spite of themselves.*] Oh, to be back in the fine days of my youth, ochone! Oh, there was fine beautiful ships them days—clippers wid tall masts touching the sky—fine strong men in them—men that was sons of the sea as if 'twas the mother that bore them. Oh, the clean skins of them, and the clear eyes, the straight backs and full chests of them! Brave men they was, and bold men surely! We'd be sailing out, bound down round the Horn maybe. We'd be making sail in the dawn, with a fair breeze, singing a chanty song wid no care to it. And astern the land would be sinking low and dying out, but we'd give it no heed but a laugh, and never a look behind. For the day that was, was enough, for we was free men—and I'm thinking 'tis only slaves do be giving heed to the day that's gone or the day to come—until they're old like me. [*With a sort of religious exaltation.*] Oh, to be scudding south again wid the power of the Trade Wind driving her on steady through the nights and the days! Full sail on her! Nights and days! Nights when the foam of the wake would be flaming wid fire, when the sky'd be blazing and winking wid stars. Or the full of the moon maybe. Then you'd see her driving through the gray night, her sails stretching aloft all silver and white, not a sound on the deck, the lot of us dreaming dreams, till you'd believe 'twas no real ship at all you was on but a ghost ship like the *Flying Dutchman* they say does be roaming the seas forevermore widout touching a port. And there was the days, too. A warm sun on the clean decks.

Sun warming the blood of you, and wind over the miles of shiny green ocean like strong drink to your lungs. Work—aye, hard work—but who'd mind that at all? Sure, you worked under the sky and 'twas work wid skill and daring to it. And wid the day done, in the dog watch, smoking me pipe at ease, the lookout would be raising land maybe, and we'd see the mountains of South Americy wid the red fire of the setting sun painting their white tops and the clouds floating by them! [*His tone of exaltation ceases. He goes on mournfully.*] Yerra, what's the use of talking? 'Tis a dead man's whisper. [*To YANK resentfully.*] 'Twas them days men belonged to ships, not now. 'Twas them days a ship was part of the sea, and a man was part of a ship, and the sea joined all together and made it one. [*Scornfully.*] Is it one wid this you'd be, Yank—black smoke from the funnels smudging the sea, smudging the decks—the bloody engines pounding and throbbing and shaking—wid divil a sight of sun or a breath of clean air—choking our lungs wid coal dust—breaking our backs and hearts in the hell of the stokehole—feeding the bloody furnace—feeding our lives along wid the coal, I'm thinking—caged in by steel from a sight of the sky like bloody apes in the Zoo! [*With a harsh laugh.*] Ho-ho, divil mend you! Is it to belong to that you're wishing? Is it a flesh and blood wheel of the engines you'd be?

YANK [*who has been listening with a contemptuous sneer, barks out the answer*]. Sure ting! Dat's me. What about it?

PADDY [*as if to himself—with great sorrow*]. Me time is past due. That a great wave wid sun in the heart of it may sweep me over the side sometime I'd be dreaming of the days that's gone!

## *The Individual in a World Society*

YANK. Aw, yuh crazy Mick! [*He springs to his feet and advances on PADDY threateningly—then stops, fighting some queer struggle within himself—lets his hands fall to his sides—contemptuously.*] Aw, take it easy. Yuh're aw right, at dat. Yuh're bugs, dat's all—nutty as a cuckoo. All dat tripe yuh been pullin'— Aw, dat's all right. On'y it's dead, get me? Yuh don't belong no more, see. Yuh don't get de stuff. Yuh're too old. [*Disgustedly.*] But aw say, come up for air onct in a while, can't yuh? See what's happened since yuh croaked. [*He suddenly bursts forth vehemently, growing more and more excited.*] Say! Sure! Sure I meant it! What de hell— Say, lemme talk! Hey! Hey, you old Harp! Hey, youse guys! Say, listen to me—wait a moment—I gotter talk, see. I belong and he don't. He's dead but I'm livin'. Listen to me! Sure I'm part of de engines! Why de hell not! Dey move, don't dey? Dey're speed, ain't dey? Dey smash trou, don't dey? Twenty-five knots a hour! Dat's goin' some! Dat's new stuff! Dat belongs! But him, he's too old. He gets dizzy. Say, listen. All dat crazy tripe about nights and days; all dat crazy tripe about stars and moons; all dat crazy tripe about suns and winds, fresh air and de rest of it— Aw hell, dat's all a dope dream! Hittin' de pipe of de past, dat's what he's doin'. He's old and don't belong no more. But me, I'm young! I'm in de pink! I move wit it! It, get me! I mean de ting dat's de guts of all dis. It ploughs trou all de tripe he's been sayin'. It blows dat up! It knocks dat dead! It slams dat offen de face of de oith! It, get me! De engines and de coal and de smoke and all de rest of it! He can't breathe and swallow coal dust, but I kin, see? Dat's fresh air for me! Dat's food for me! I'm new, get me? Hell in de stoke-

hole? Sure! It takes a man to work in hell. Hell, sure, dat's my fav'rite climate. I eat it up! I git fat on it! It's me makes it hot! It's me makes it roar! It's me makes it move! Sure, on'y for me everyting stops. It all goes dead, get me? De noise and smoke and all de engines movin' de woild, dey stop. Dere ain't nothin' no more! Dat's what I'm sayin'. Everyting else dat makes de woild move, somep'n makes it move. It can't move witout somep'n else, see? Den yuh get down to me. I'm at de bottom, get me! Dere ain't nothin' foither. I'm de end! I'm de start! I start somep'n and de woild moves! It—dat's me!—de new dat's moiderin' de old! I'm de ting in coal dat makes it boin; I'm steam and oil for de engines; I'm de ting in noise dat makes yuh hear it; I'm smoke and express trains and steamers and factory whistles; I'm de ting in gold dat makes it money! And I'm what makes iron into steel! Steel, dat stands for de whole ting! And I'm steel—steel—steel! I'm de muscles in steel, de punch behind it! [*As he says this he pounds with his fist against the steel bunks. All the men, roused to a pitch of frenzied self-glorification by his speech, do likewise. There is a deafening metallic roar, through which YANK's voice can be heard bellowing.*] Slaves, hell! We run de whole woiks. All de rich guys dat tink dey're somep'n, dey ain't nothin'! Dey don't belong. But us guys, we're in de move, we're at de bottom, de whole ting is us! [*PADDY from the start of YANK's speech has been taking one gulp after another from his bottle, at first frightenedly, as if he were afraid to listen, then desperately, as if to drown his senses, but finally has achieved complete indifferent, even amused, drunkenness. YANK sees his lips moving. He quells the uproar with a shout.*] Hey, youse guys, take it easy!

## "The Hairy Ape"

Wait a moment! De nutty Harp is sayin' somep'n.

PADDY [*is heard now—throws his head back with a mocking burst of laughter*]. Ho-ho-ho-ho-ho—

YANK [*drawing back his fist, with a snarl*]. Aw! Look out who yuh're givin' the bark!

PADDY [*begins to sing the "Miller of Dee" with enormous good nature*].

"I care for nobody, no, not I,  
And nobody cares for me."

YANK [*good-natured himself in a flash, interrupts PADDY with a slap on the bare back like a report*]. Dat's de stuff! Now yuh're gettin' wise to somep'n. Care for nobody, dat's de dopel! To hell wit 'em all! And nix on nobody else carin'. I kin care for myself, get me! [*Eight bells sound, muffled, vibrating through the steel walls as if some enormous brazen gong were imbedded in the heart of the ship. All the men jump up mechanically, file through the door silently close upon each*

*other's heels in what is very like a prisoners' lockstep*. YANK slaps PADDY on the back.]. Our watch, yuh old Harp! [*Mockingly*]. Come on down in hell. Eat up de coal dust. Drink in de heat. It's it, see! Act like yuh liked it, yuh better—or croak yuhself.

PADDY [*with jovial defiance*]. To the devil wid it! I'll not report this watch. Let thim log me and be damned. I'm no slave the like of you. I'll be sittin' here at me ease, and drinking, and thinking, and dreaming dreams.

YANK [*contemptuously*]. Tinkin' and dreamin', what'll that get yuh? What's tinkin' got to do with it? We move, don't we? Speed, ain't it? Fog, dat's all you stand for. But we drive trou dat, don't we? We split dat up and smash trou—twenty-five knots a hour! [*Turns his back on PADDY scornfully*]. Aw, yuh make me sick! Yuh don't belong! [*He strides out the door in rear. PADDY hums to himself, blinking drowsily*].

CURTAIN

## SCENE II

[*Two days out. A section of the promenade deck. MILDRED DOUGLAS and her aunt are discovered reclining in deck chairs. The former is a girl of twenty, slender, delicate, with a pale, pretty face marred by a self-conscious expression of disdainful superiority. She looks fretful, nervous and discontented, bored by her own anemia. Her aunt is a pompous and proud—and fat—old lady. She is a type even to the point of a double chin and lorgnettes. She is dressed pretentiously, as if afraid her face alone would never indicate her position in life. MILDRED is dressed all in white.*

*The impression to be conveyed by this scene is one of the beautiful, vivid life of the sea all about—sunshine on the deck in a great flood, the fresh sea wind blowing across it. In the midst of this, these two incongruous, artificial figures, inert and disharmonious, the elder like a gray lump of dough touched up with rouge, the younger looking as if the vitality of her stock had been sapped before she was conceived, so that she is the expression not of its life energy but merely of the artificialities that energy had won for itself in the spending.*]



## *The Individual in a World Society*

MILDRED [*looking up with affected dreaminess*]. How the black smoke swirls back against the sky! Is it not beautiful?

AUNT [*without looking up*]. I dislike smoke of any kind.

MILDRED. My great-grandmother smoked a pipe—a clay pipe.

AUNT [*ruffling*]. Vulgar!

MILDRED. She was too distant a relative to be vulgar. Time mellows pipes.

AUNT [*pretending boredom but irritated*]. Did the sociology you took up at college teach you that—to play the ghoul on every possible occasion, excavating old bones? Why not let your great-grandmother rest in her grave?

MILDRED [*dreamily*]. With her pipe beside her—puffing in Paradise.

AUNT [*with spite*]. Yes, you are a natural born ghoul. You are even getting to look like one, my dear.

MILDRED [*in a passionless tone*]. I detest you, Aunt. [*Looking at her critically.*] Do you know what you remind me of? Of a cold pork pudding against a background of linoleum tablecloth in the kitchen of a—but the possibilities are wearisome. [*She closes her eyes.*]

AUNT [*with a bitter laugh*]. Merci for your candor. But since I am and must be your chaperon—in appearance, at least—let us patch up some sort of armed truce. For my part you are quite free to indulge any pose of eccentricity that beguiles you—as long as you observe the amenities—

MILDRED [*drawling*]. The inanities?

AUNT [*going on as if she hadn't heard*]. After exhausting the morbid thrills of social service work on New York's East Side—how they must have hated you, by the way, the poor that you made so much poorer in their own eyes!—you are now bent on making your slumming international. Well, I hope Whitechapel will pro-

vide the needed nerve tonic. Do not ask me to chapéron you there, however. I told your father I would not. I loathe deformity. We will hire an army of detectives and you may investigate everything—they allow you to see.

MILDRED [*protesting with a trace of genuine earnestness*]. Please do not mock at my attempts to discover how the other half lives. Give me credit for some sort of groping sincerity in that at least. I would like to help them. I would like to be some use in the world. Is it my fault I don't know how? I would like to be sincere, to touch life somewhere. [*With weary bitterness.*] But I'm afraid I have neither the vitality nor integrity. All that was burnt out in our stock before I was born. Grandfather's blast furnaces, flaming to the sky, melting steel, making millions—then father keeping those home fires burning, making more millions—and little me at the tail-end of it all. I'm a waste product in the Bessemer process—like the millions. Or rather, I inherit the acquired trait of the by-product, wealth, but none of the energy, none of the strength of the steel that made it. I am sired by gold and damned by it, as they say at the race track—damned in more ways than one. [*She laughs mirthlessly.*]

AUNT [*unimpressed—superciliously*]. You seem to be going in for sincerity to-day. It isn't becoming to you, really—except as an obvious pose. Be as artificial as you are, I advise. There's a sort of sincerity in that, you know. And, after all, you must confess you like that better.

MILDRED [*again affected and bored*]. Yes, I suppose I do. Pardon me for my outburst. When a leopard complains of its spots, it must sound rather grotesque. [*In a mocking tone.*] Purr, little leopard. Purr, scratch, tear, kill, gorge yourself and be

"The Hairy Ape"

happy—only stay in the jungle where your spots are camouflage. In a cage they make you conspicuous.

AUNT. I don't know what you are talking about.

MILDRED. It would be rude to talk about anything to you. Let's just talk. [*She looks at her wrist watch.*] Well, thank goodness, it's about time for them to come for me. That ought to give me a new thrill, Aunt.

AUNT [*affectedly troubled*]. You don't mean to say you're really going? The dirt—the heat must be frightful—

MILDRED. Grandfather started as a pud-dler. I should have inherited an immunity to heat that would make a salamander shiver. It will be fun to put it to the test.

AUNT. But don't you have to have the captain's—or someone's—permission to visit the stokehole?

MILDRED [*with a triumphant smile*]. I have it—both his and the chief engineer's. Oh, they didn't want to at first, in spite of my social service credentials. They didn't seem a bit anxious that I should investigate how the other half lives and works on a ship. So I had to tell them that my father, the president of Nazareth Steel, chairman of the board of directors of this line, had told me it would be all right.

AUNT. He didn't.

MILDRED. How naïve age makes one! But I said he did, Aunt. I even said he had given me a letter to them—which I had lost. And they were afraid to take the chance that I might be lying. [*Excitedly.*] So it's ho! for the stokehole. The second engineer is to escort me. [*Looking at her watch again.*] It's time. And here he comes, I think. [*The SECOND ENGINEER enters. He is a husky, fine-looking man of thirty-five or so. He stops before the two and tips his cap, visibly embarrassed and ill-at-ease.*]

SECOND ENGINEER. Miss Douglas?

MILDRED. Yes. [*Throwing off her rugs and getting to her feet.*] Are we all ready to start?

SECOND ENGINEER. In just a second, ma'am. I'm waiting for the Fourth. He's coming along.

MILDRED [*with a scornful smile*]. You don't care to shoulder this responsibility alone, is that it?

SECOND ENGINEER [*forcing a smile*]. Two are better than one. [*Disturbed by her eyes, glances out to sea—blurts out.*] A fine day we're having.

MILDRED. Is it?

SECOND ENGINEER. A nice warm breeze—

MILDRED. It feels cold to me.

SECOND ENGINEER. But it's hot enough in the sun—

MILDRED. Not hot enough for me. I don't like Nature. I was never athletic.

SECOND ENGINEER [*forcing a smile*]. Well, you'll find it hot enough where you're going.

MILDRED. Do you mean hell?

SECOND ENGINEER [*flabbergasted, decides to laugh*]. Ho-ho! No, I mean the stoke-hole.

MILDRED. My grandfather was a pud-dler. He played with boiling steel.

SECOND ENGINEER [*all at sea—uneasily*]. Is that so? Hum, you'll excuse me, ma'am, but are you intending to wear that dress?

MILDRED. Why not?

SECOND ENGINEER. You'll likely rub against oil and dirt. It can't be helped.

MILDRED. It doesn't matter. I have lots of white dresses.

SECOND ENGINEER. I have an old coat you might throw over—

MILDRED. I have fifty dresses like this. I will throw this one into the sea when I come back. That ought to wash it clean, don't you think?

## *The Individual in a World Society*

SECOND ENGINEER [*doggedly*]. There's ladders to climb down that are none too clean—and dark alleyways—

MILDRED. I will wear this very dress and none other.

SECOND ENGINEER. No offense meant. It's none of my business. I was only warning you—

MILDRED. Warning? That sounds thrilling.

SECOND ENGINEER [*looking down the deck—with a sigh of relief*]. There's the Fourth now. He's waiting for us. If you'll come—

MILDRED. Go on. I'll follow you. [*He goes. MILDRED turns a mocking smile on her aunt.*] An oaf—but a handsome, virile oaf.

AUNT [*scornfully*]. Poser!

MILDRED. Take care. He said there were dark alleyways—

AUNT [*in the same tone*]. Poser!

MILDRED [*biting her lips angrily*]. You are right. But would that my millions were not so anemically chaste!

AUNT. Yes, for a fresh pose I have no doubt you would drag the name of Douglas in the gutter!

MILDRED. From which it sprang. Good-by, Aunt. Don't pray too hard that I may fall into the fiery furnace.

AUNT. Poser!

MILDRED [*viciously*]. Old hag. [*She slaps her aunt insultingly across the face and walks off, laughingly gaily.*]

AUNT [*screams after her*]. I said poser!

CURTAIN

### SCENE III

[*The stokehole. In the rear, the dimly-outlined bulks of the furnaces and boilers. High overhead one hanging electric bulb sheds just enough light through the murky air laden with coal dust to pile up masses of shadows everywhere. A line of men, stripped to the waist, is before the furnace doors. They bend over, looking neither to right nor left, handling their shovels as if they were part of their bodies, with a strange, awkward, swinging rhythm. They use the shovels to throw open the furnace doors. Then from these fiery round holes in the black a flood of terrific light and heat pours full upon the men who are outlined in silhouette in the crouching, inhuman attitudes of chained gorillas. The men shovel with a rhythmic motion, swinging as on a pivot from the coal which lies in heaps on the floor behind to hurl it into the flaming mouths before them. There is a tumult of noise—the brazen clang of the furnace doors as*

*they are flung open or slammed shut, the grating, teeth-gritting grind of steel against steel, of crunching coal. This clash of sounds stuns one's ears with its rending dissonance. But there is order in it, rhythm, a mechanical regulated recurrence, a tempo. And rising above all, making the air hum with the quiver of liberated energy, the roar of leaping flames in the furnaces, the monotonous throbbing beat of the engines.*

*As the curtain rises, the furnace doors are shut. The men are taking a breathing spell. One or two are arranging the coal behind them, pulling it into more accessible heaps. The others can be dimly made out leaning on their shovels in relaxed attitudes of exhaustion.]*

PADDY [*from somewhere in the line—plaintively*]. Yerra, will this devil's own watch nivir end? Me back is broke. I'm destroyed entirely.

## "The Hairy Ape"

YANK [from the center of the line—with exuberant scorn]. Aw, yuh make me sick! Lie down and croak, why don't yuh? Always beecin', dat's you! Say, dis is a cinch! Dis was made for me! It's my meat, get me! [A whistle is blown—a thin, shrill note from somewhere overhead in the darkness. YANK curses without resentment.] Dere's de damn engineer crackin' de whip. He tink's we're loafin'.

PADDY [vindictively]. God stiffen him!

YANK [in an exultant tone of command]. Come on, youse guys! Git into de game! She's gittin' hungry! Pile some grub in her. Trow it into her belly! Come on now, all of youse! Open her up! [At this last all the men, who have followed his movements of getting into position, throw open their furnace doors with a deafening clang. The fiery light floods over their shoulders as they bend round for the coal. Rivulets of sooty sweat have traced maps on their backs. The enlarged muscles form bunches of high light and shadow.]

YANK [chanting a count as he shovels without seeming effort]. One—two—tree— [His voice rising exultantly in the joy of battle.] Dat's de stuff! Let her have it! All togedder now! Sling it into her! Let her ride! Shoot de piece now! Call de toin on her! Drive her into it! Feel her move! Watch her smoke! Speed, dat's her middle name! Give her coal, youse guys! Coal, dat's her booze! Drink it up, baby! Let's see yuh sprint! Dig in and gain a lap! Dere she go-o-es. [This last in the chanting formula of the gallery gods at the six-day bike race. He slams his furnace door shut. The others do likewise with as much unison as their wearied bodies will permit. The effect is of one fiery eye after another being blotted out with a series of accompanying bangs.]

PADDY [groaning]. Me back is broke. I'm bate out—bate— [There is a pause. Then the inexorable whistle sounds again from the dim regions above the electric light. There is a growl of cursing rage from all sides.]

YANK [shaking his fist upward—contemptuously]. Take it easy dere, you! Who d'yuh tink's runnin' dis game, me or you? When I git ready, we move. Not before! When I git ready, get me!

VOICES [approvingly].

That's the stuff!

Yank tal him, py golly!

Yank ain't affeerd.

Goot poy, Yank!

Give him hell!

Tell 'im 'e's a bloody swine!

Bloody slave-driver!

YANK [contemptuously]. He ain't got no noive. He's yellow, get me? All de engineers is yellow. Dey got streaks a mile wide. Aw, to hell wit him! Let's move, youse guys. We had a rest. Come on, she needs it! Give her pep! It ain't for him. Him and his whistle, dey don't belong. But we belong, see! We gotter feed de baby! Come on! [He turns and flings his furnace door open. They all follow his lead. At this instant the SECOND and FOURTH ENGINEERS enter from the darkness on the left with MILDRED between them. She starts, turns paler, her pose is crumbling, she shivers with fright in spite of the blazing heat, but forces herself to leave the ENGINEERS and take a few steps nearer the men. She is right behind YANK. All this happens quickly while the men have their backs turned.]

YANK. Come on, youse guys! [He is turning to get coal when the whistle sounds again in a peremptory, irritating note. This drives YANK into a sudden fury. While the other men have turned full

## *The Individual in a World Society*

around and stopped dumfounded by the spectacle of MILDRED standing there in her white dress, YANK does not turn far enough to see her. Besides, his head is thrown back, he blinks upward through the murk trying to find the owner of the whistle, he brandishes his shovel murderously over his head in one hand, pounding on his chest, gorilla-like, with the other, shouting.] Toin off dat whistle! Come down outa dere, yuh yellow, brass-buttoned, Belfast bum, yuh! Come down and I'll knock yer brains out! Yuh lousy, stinkin', yellow mut of a Catholic-moiderin' bastard! Come down and I'll moider yuh! Pullin' dat whistle on me, huh? I'll show yuh! I'll crash yer skull in! I'll drive yer teet' down yer troat! I'll slam yer nose trou de back of yer head! I'll cut yer guts out for a nickel, yuh lousy boob, yuh dirty, crummy, muck-eatin' son of a— [Suddenly he becomes conscious of all the other men staring at something directly behind his back. He whirls defensively with a snarling, murderous growl, crouching to spring, his lips drawn back over his teeth, his small eyes gleaming ferociously. He sees MILDRED, like a white apparition in the full light from the open furnace doors. He glares into her eyes, turned to stone. As for her,

during his speech she has listened, paralyzed with horror, terror, her whole personality crushed, beaten in, collapsed, by the terrific impact of this unknown, abysmal brutality, naked and shameless. As she looks at his gorilla face, as his eyes bore into hers, she utters a low, choking cry and shrinks away from him, putting both hands up before her eyes to shut out the sight of his face, to protect her own. This startles YANK to a reaction. His mouth falls open, his eyes grow bewildered.]

MILDRED [about to faint—to the ENGINEERS, who now have her one by each arm—whimperingly]. Take me away! Oh, the filthy beast! [She faints. They carry her quickly back, disappearing in the darkness at the left, rear. An iron door clangs shut. Rage and bewildered fury rush back on YANK. He feels himself insulted in some unknown fashion in the very heart of his pride. He roars]: God damn yuh! [And hurls his shovel after them at the door which has just closed. It hits the steel bulkhead with a clang and falls clattering on the steel floor. From overhead the whistle sounds again in a long, angry, insistent command.]

CURTAIN

## SCENE IV

[The firemen's forecandle. YANK's watch has just come off duty and had dinner. Their faces and bodies shine from a soap and water scrubbing but around their eyes, where a hasty dousing does not touch, the coal dust sticks like black make-up, giving them a queer, sinister expression. YANK has not washed either face or body. He stands out in contrast to them, a blackened, brooding figure. He is seated for-

ward on a bench in the exact attitude of Rodin's "The Thinker." The others, most of them smoking pipes, are staring at YANK half-apprehensively, as if fearing an outburst; half-amusedly, as if they saw a joke somewhere that tickled them.]

VOICES. He ain't ate nothin'.

Py golly, a fallar gat to gat grub in him.  
Divil a lie.

## "The Hairy Ape"

Yank feeda da fire, no feeda da face.

Ha-ha.

He ain't even washed hisself.

He's forgot.

Hey, Yank, you forgot to wash.

YANK [*sullenly*]. Forgot nothin'! To hell wit washin'.

VOICES. It'll stick to you.

It'll get under your skin.

Give yer the bleedin' itch, that's wot.

It makes spots on you—like a leopard.

Like a piebald nigger, you mean.

Better wash up, Yank.

You sleep better.

Wash up, Yank.

Wash up! Wash up!

YANK [*resentfully*]. Aw say, youse guys. Lemme alone. Can't youse see I'm tryin' to tink?

ALL [*repeating the word after him as one with cynical mockery*]. Think! [*The word has a brazen, metallic quality as if their throats were phonograph horns. It is followed by a chorus of hard, barking laughter.*]

YANK [*springing to his feet and glaring at them belligerently*]. Yes, tink! Tink, dat's what I said! What about it? [*They are silent, puzzled by his sudden resentment at what used to be one of his jokes. YANK sits down again in the same attitude of "The Thinker".*]

VOICES. Leave him alone.

He's got a grouch on.

Why wouldn't he?

PADDY [*with a wink at the others*]. Sure I know what's the matther. 'Tis aisy to see. He's fallen in love, I'm telling you.

ALL [*repeating the word after him as one with cynical mockery*]. Love! [*The word has a brazen, metallic quality as if their throats were phonograph horns. It is followed by a chorus of hard, barking laughter.*]

YANK [*with a contemptuous snort*]. Love, hell! Hate, dat's what. I've fallen in hate, get me?

PADDY [*philosophically*]. 'Twould take a wise man to tell one from the other. [*With a bitter, ironical scorn, increasing as he goes on.*] But I'm telling you it's love that's in it. Sure what else but love for us poor bastes in the stokehole would be bringing a fine lady, dressed like a white quane, down a mile of ladders and steps to be havin' a look at us? [*A growl of anger goes up from all sides.*]

LONG [*jumping on a bench—hectically*]. Hinsultin' us! Hinsultin' us, the bloody cow! And them bloody engineers! What right 'as they got to be exhibitin' us 's if we was bleedin' monkeys in a menagerie? Did we sign for hinsults to our dignity as 'onest workers? Is that in the ship's articles? You kin bloody well bet it ain't! But I knows why they done it. I arsked a deck steward 'o she was and 'e told me. 'Er old man's a bleedin' millionaire, a bloody Capitalist! 'E's got enuf bloody gold to sink this bleedin' ship! 'E makes arf the bloody steel in the world! 'E owns this bloody boat! And you and me, Comrades, we're 'is slaves! And the skipper and mates and engineers, they're 'is slaves! And she's 'is bloody daughter and we're all 'er slaves, too! And she gives 'er orders as 'ow she wants to see the bloody animals below decks and down they takes 'er! [*There is a roar of rage from all sides.*]

YANK [*blinking at him bewilderedly*]. Say! Wait a moment! Is all dat straight goods?

LONG. Straight as string! The bleedin' steward as waits on 'em, 'e told me about 'er. And what're we goin' ter do, I arskes yer? 'Ave we got ter swaller 'er hinsults like dogs? It ain't in the ship's articles. I tell yer we got a case. We kin go to law—

## *The Individual in a World Society*

YANK [*with abysmal contempt*]. Hell! Law!

ALL [*repeating the word after him as one with cynical mockery*]. Law! [*The word has a brazen metallic quality as if their throats were phonograph horns. It is followed by a chorus of hard, barking laughter.*]

LONG [*feeling the ground slipping from under his feet—desperately*]. As voters and citizens we kin force the bloody governments—

YANK [*with abysmal contempt*]. Hell! Governments!

ALL [*repeating the word after him as one with cynical mockery*]. Governments! [*The word has a brazen metallic quality as if their throats were phonograph horns. It is followed by a chorus of hard, barking laughter.*]

LONG [*hysterically*]. We're free and equal in the sight of God—

YANK [*with abysmal contempt*]. Hell! God!

ALL [*repeating the word after him as one with cynical mockery*]. God! [*The word has a brazen metallic quality as if their throats were phonograph horns. It is followed by a chorus of hard, barking laughter.*]

YANK [*witheringly*]. Aw, join de Salvation Army!

ALL. Sit down! Shut up! Damn fool! Sea-lawyer! [LONG *slinks back out of sight.*]

PADDY [*continuing the trend of his thoughts as if he had never been interrupted—bitterly*]. And there she was standing behind us, and the Second pointing at us like a man you'd hear in a circus would be saying: In this cage is a queerer kind of baboon than ever you'd find in darkest Africy. We roast them in their own sweat—and be damned if you won't

hear some of them saying they like it! [*He glances scornfully at YANK.*]

YANK [*with a bewildered uncertain growl*]. Aw!

PADDY. And there was Yank roarin' curses and turning round wid his shovel to brain her—and she looked at him, and him at her—

YANK [*slowly*]. She was all white. I tought she was a ghost. Sure.

PADDY [*with heavy, biting sarcasm*]. 'Twas love at first sight, divil a doubt of it! If you'd seen the endearin' look on her pale mug when she shriveled away with her hands over her eyes to shut out the sight of him! Sure, 'twas as if she'd seen a great hairy ape escaped from the Zoo!

YANK [*stung—with a growl of rage*]. Aw!

PADDY. And the loving way Yank heaved his shovel at the skull of her, only she was out the door! [*A grin breaking over his face.*] 'Twas touching, I'm telling you! It put the touch of home, swate home in the stokehole. [*There is a roar of laughter from all.*]

YANK [*glaring at PADDY menacingly*]. Aw, choke dat off, see!

PADDY [*not heeding him—to the others*]. And her grabbin' at the Second's arm for protection. [*With a grotesque imitation of a woman's voice.*] Kiss me, Engineer dear, for it's dark down here and me old man's in Wall Street making money! Hug me tight, darlin', for I'm afeerd in the dark and me mother's on deck makin' eyes at the skipper! [*Another roar of laughter.*]

YANK [*threateningly*]. Say! What yuh tryin' to do, kid me, yuh old Harp?

PADDY. Divil a bit! Ain't I wishin' myself you'd brained her?

YANK [*fiercely*]. I'll brain her! I'll brain her yet, wait 'n' see! [*Coming over to*

*"The Hairy Ape"*

PADDY—*slowly*.] Say, is dat what she called me—a hairy ape?

PADDY. She looked it at you if she didn't say the word itself.

YANK [*grinning horribly*]. Hairy ape, huh? Sure! Dat's de way she looked at me, aw right. Hairy ape! So dat's me, huh? [*Bursting into rage—as if she were still in front of him.*] Yuh skinny tart! Yuh white-faced bum, yuh! I'll show yuh who's a ape! [*Turning to the others, bewilderedment seizing him again.*] Say, youse guys. I was bawlin' him out for pullin' de whistle on us. You heard me. And den I seen youse lookin' at somep'n and I tought he'd sneaked down to come up in back of me, and I hopped round to knock him dead wit de shovel. And dere she was wit de light on her! Christ, yuh coulda pushed me over with a finger! I was scared, get me? Sure! I tought she was a ghost, see? She was all in white like dey wrap around stiffs. You seen her. Kin yuh blame me? She didn't belong, dat's what. And den when I come to and seen it was a real skoit and seen de way she was lookin' at me—like Paddy said—Christ, I was sore, get me? I don't stand for dat stuff from nobody. And I flung de shovel—on'y she'd beat it. [*Furiously.*] I wished it'd banged her! I wished it'd knocked her block off!

LONG. And be 'anged for murder or 'lec-trocuted? She ain't bleedin' well worth it.

YANK. I don't give a damn what! I'd be square wit her, wouldn't I? Tink I want'er let her put somep'n over on me? Tink I'm goin' to let her git away wit dat stuff? Yuh don't know me! No one ain't never put nothin' over on me and got away wit it, see!—not dat kind of stuff—no guy and no skoit neither! I'll fix her! Maybe she'll come down again—

VOICE. No chance, Yank. You scared her out of a year's growth.

YANK. I scared her? Why de hell should I scare her? Who de hell is she? Ain't she de same as me? Hairy ape, huh? [*With his old confident bravado.*] I'll show her I'm better'n her, if she on'y knew it. I belong and she don't, see! I move and she's dead! Twenty-five knots a hour, dat's me! Dat carries her but I make dat. She's on'y baggage. Sure! [*Again bewilderedly.*] But, Christ, she was funny lookin'! Did yuh pipe her hands? White and skinny. Yuh could see de bones through 'em. And her mush, dat was dead white, too. And her eyes, dey was like dey'd seen a ghost. Me, dat was! Sure! Hairy ape! Ghost, huh? Look at dat arm! [*He extends his right arm, swelling out the great muscles.*] I coulda took her wit dat, wit just my little finger even, and broke her in two. [*Again bewilderedly.*] Say, who is dat skoit, huh? What is she? What's she come from? Who made her? Who give her de noive to look at me like dat? Dis ting's got my goat right. I don't get her. She's new to me. What does a skoit like her mean, huh? She don't belong, get me! I can't see her. [*With growing anger.*] But one ting I'm wise to, aw right, aw right! Youse all kin bet your shoits I'll git even wit her. I'll show her if she tinks she— She grinds de organ and I'm on de string, huh? I'll fix her! Let her come down again and I'll fling her in de furnace! She'll move den! She won't shiver at nothin', den! Speed, dat'll be her! She'll belong den! [*He grins horribly.*]

PADDY. She'll never come. She's had her belly-full, I'm telling you. She'll be in bed now, I'm thinking, wid ten doctors and nurses feedin' her salts to clean the fear out of her.

YANK [*enraged*]. Yuh tink I made her sick, too, do yuh? Just lookin' at me, huh? Hairy ape, huh? [*In a frenzy of rage.*] I'll



## *The Individual in a World Society*

fix her! I'll tell her where to git off! She'll git down on her knees and take it back or I'll bust de face offen her! [*Shaking one fist upward and beating on his chest with the other.*] I'll find yuh! I'm comin', d'yuh hear? I'll fix yuh, God damn yuh! [*He makes a rush for the door.*]

VOICES. Stop him!

He'll get shot!

He'll murder her!

Trip him up!

Hold him!

He's gone crazy!

Gott, he's strong!

Hold him down!

Look out for a kick!

Pin his arms!

[*They have all piled on him and, after a fierce struggle, by sheer weight of numbers have borne him to the floor just inside the door.*]

PADDY [*who has remained detached*]. Kape him down till he's cooled off. [*Scornfully.*] Yerra, Yank, you're a great fool. Is it payin' attention at all you are to the like of that skinny sow widout one drop of rale blood in her?

YANK [*frenziedly, from the bottom of the heap*]. She done me doit! She done me doit, didn't she? I'll git square wit her! I'll get her some way! Git offen me, youse guys! Lemme up! I'll show her who's a ape!

CURTAIN

### SCENE V

[*Three weeks later. A corner of Fifth Avenue in the Fifties on a fine Sunday morning. A general atmosphere of clean, well-tidied, wide street; a flood of mellow, tempered sunshine; gentle, genteel breezes. In the rear, the show windows of two shops, a jewelry establishment on the corner, a furrier's next to it. Here the adornments of extreme wealth are tantalizingly displayed. The jeweler's window is gaudy with glittering diamonds, emeralds, rubies, pearls, etc., fashioned in ornate tiaras, crowns, necklaces, collars, etc. From each piece hangs an enormous tag from which a dollar sign and numerals in intermittent electric lights wink out the incredible prices. The same in the furrier's. Rich furs of all varieties hang there bathed in a downpour of artificial light. The general effect is of a background of magnificence cheapened and made grotesque by commercialism, a background in tawdry disharmony with the clear light and sunshine on the street itself.*]

Up the side street YANK and LONG come swaggering. LONG is dressed in shore clothes, wears a black Windsor tie, cloth cap. YANK is in his dirty dungarees. A fireman's cap with black peak is cocked defiantly on the side of his head. He has not shaved for days and around his fierce, resentful eyes—as around those of LONG to a lesser degree—the black smudge of coal dust still sticks like make-up. They hesitate and stand together at the corner, swaggering, looking about them with a forced, defiant contempt.]

LONG [*indicating it all with an oratorical gesture*]. Well, 'ere we are. Fif' Avenue. This 'ere's their bleedin' private lane, as yer might say. [*Bitterly.*] We're trespassers 'ere. Proletarians keep orf the grass!

YANK [*dully*]. I don't see no grass, yuh boob. [*Staring at the sidewalk.*] Clean, ain't it? Yuh could eat a fried egg offen it. The white wings got some job sweepin'

*"The Hairy Ape"*

dis up. [*Looking up and down the avenue—surlily.*] Where's all de white-collar stiff s yuh said was here—and de skoits—her kind?

LONG. In church, blarst 'em! Arskin' Jesus to give 'em more money.

YANK. Choich, huh? I useter go to choich onct—sure—when I was a kid. Me old man and woman, dey made me. Dey never went demselves, dough. Always got too big a head on Sunday mornin', dat was dem. [*With a grin.*] Dey was scrap-pers for fair, bot' of dem. On Satiday nights when dey bot' got a skinful dey could put up a bout oughter been staged at de Garden. When dey got trough dere wasn't a chair or table wit a leg under it. Or else dey bot' jumped on me for somep'n. Dat was where I loined to take punishment. [*With a grin and a swagger.*] I'm a chip offen de old block, get me?

LONG. Did yer old man follow the sea?

YANK. Naw. Worked along shore. I runned away when me old lady croaked wit de tremens. I helped at truckin' and in de market. Den I shipped in de stokehole. Sure. Dat belongs. De rest was nothin'. [*Looking around him.*] I ain't never seen dis before. De Brooklyn waterfront, dat was where I was dragged up. [*Taking a deep breath.*] Dis ain't so bad at dat, huh?

LONG. Not bad? Well, we pays for it wiv our bloody sweat, if yer wants to know!

YANK [*with sudden angry disgust*]. Aw, hell! I don't see no one, see—like her. All dis gives me a pain. It don't belong. Say, ain't dere a back room around dis dump? Let's go shoot a ball. All dis is too clean and quiet and dolled up, get me! It gives me a pain.

LONG. Wait and yer'll bloody well see—

YANK. I don't wait for no one. I keep on de move. Say, what yuh drag me up

here for, anyway? Tryin' to kid me, yuh simp, yuh?

LONG. Yer wants to get back at 'er, don't yer? That's what yer been sayin' every bloomin' hour since she hinsulted yer.

YANK [*vehemently*]. Sure ting I dol! Didn't I try to get even wit her in South-ampton? Didn't I sneak on de dock and wait for her by de gangplank? I was goin' to spit in her pale mug, see! Sure, right in her pop-eyes! Dat woulda made me even, see? But no chanct. Dere was a whole army of plainclothes bulls around. Dey spotted me and gimme de bum's rush. I never seen her. But I'll git square wit her yet, you watch! [*Furiously.*] De lousy tart! She tinks she kin get away wit moi-der—but not wit me! I'll fix her! I'll tink of a way!

LONG [*as disgusted as he dares to be*]. Ain't that why I brought yer up 'ere—to show yer? Yer been lookin' at this 'ere 'ole affair wrong. Yer been actin' an' talkin' 's if it was all a bleedin' personal matter between yer and that bloody cow. I wants to convince yer she was on'y a representative of 'er clarss. I wants to awaken yer bloody clarss consciousness. Then yer'll see it's 'er clarss yer've got to fight, not 'er alone. There's a 'ole mob of 'em like 'er, Gawd blind 'em!

YANK [*spitting on his hands—belligerently*]. De more de merrier when I gits started. Bring on de gang!

LONG. Yer'll see 'em in arf a mo', when that church lets out. [*He turns and sees the window display in the two stores for the first time.*] Blimey! Look at that, will yer? [*They both walk back and stand looking in the jeweler's.* LONG *flies into a fury.*] Just look at this 'ere bloomin' mess! Just look at it! Look at the bleedin' prices on 'em—more'n our 'ole bloody stokehole makes in ten voyages sweatin'

## *The Individual in a World Society*

in 'ell! And they—'er and 'er bloody clarrs—buys 'em for toys to dangle on 'em! One of these 'ere would buy scoff for a starvin' family for a year!

YANK. Aw, cut de sob stuff! T' hell wit de starvin' family! Yuh'll be passin' de hat to me next. [*With naïve admiration.*] Say, dem tings is pretty, huh? Bet yuh dey'd hock for a piece of change aw right. [*Then turning away, bored.*] But, aw hell, what good are dey? Let her have 'em. Dey don't belong no more'n she does. [*With a gesture of sweeping the jewelers into oblivion.*] All dat don't count, get me?

LONG [*who has moved to the furrier's—indignantly*]. And I s'pose this 'ere don't count neither—skins of poor, 'armless animals slaughtered so as 'er and 'ers can keep their bleedin' noses warm!

YANK [*who has been staring at something inside—with queer excitement*]. Take a slant at dat! Give it de once-over! Monkey fur—two t'ousand bucks! [*Be-wilderedly.*] Is dat straight goods—monkey fur? What de hell—?

LONG [*bitterly*]. It's straight enuf. [*With grim humor.*] They wouldn't bloody well pay that for a 'airy ape's skin—no, nor for the 'ole livin' ape with all 'is 'ead, and body, and soul thrown in!

YANK [*clenching his fists, his face growing pale with rage as if the skin in the window were a personal insult*]. Trowin' it up in my face! Christ! I'll fix her!

LONG [*excitedly*]. Church is out. 'Ere they come, the bleedin' swine. [*After a glance at YANK's lowering face—uneasily.*] Easy goes, Comrade. Keep yer bloomin' temper. Remember force defeats itself. It ain't our weapon. We must impress our demands through peaceful means—the votes of the on-marching proletarians of the bloody world!

YANK [*with abysmal contempt*]. Votes, hell! Votes is a joke, see. Votes for women! Let dem do it!

LONG [*still more uneasily*]. Calm, now. Treat 'em wiv the proper contempt. Observe the bleedin' parasites but 'old yer 'orses.

YANK [*angrily*]. Git away from mel Yuh're yellow, dat's what. Force, dat's mel De punch, dat's me every time, see! [*The crowd from church enter from the right, sauntering slowly and affectedly, their heads held stiffly up, looking neither to right nor left, talking in toneless, simpering voices. The women are rouged, calclimined, dyed, overdressed to the nth degree. The men are in Prince Alberts, high hats, spats, canes, etc. A procession of gaudy marionettes, yet with something of the relentless horror of Frankenstein's in their detached, mechanical unawareness.*]

VOICES. Dear Doctor Caiaphas! He is so sincere!

What was the sermon? I dozed off. About the radicals, my dear—and the false doctrines that are being preached. We must organize a hundred per cent American bazaar.

And let everyone contribute one one-hundredth per cent of their income tax. What an original idea!

We can devote the proceeds to rehabilitating the veil of the temple.

But that has been done so many times.

YANK [*glaring from one to the other of them—with an insulting snort of scorn*]. Huh! Huh! [*Without seeming to see him, they make wide detours to avoid the spot where he stands in the middle of the sidewalk.*]

LONG [*frightenedly*]. Keep yer bloomin' mouth shut, I tells yer.

YANK [*viciously*]. G'wan! Tell it to Sweeney! [*He swaggers away and delib-*

## "The Hairy Ape"

*erately lurches into a top-hatted gentleman, then glares at him pugnaciously.]* Say, who d'yuh tink yuh're bumpin'? Tink yuh own de oith?

GENTLEMAN [*coldly and affectedly*]. I beg your pardon. [*He has not looked at YANK and passes on without a glance, leaving him bewildered.*]

LONG [*rushing up and grabbing YANK's arm*]. 'Ere! Come away! This wasn't what I meant. Yer'll 'ave the bloody coppers down on us.

YANK [*savagely—giving him a push that sends him sprawling*]. G'wan!

LONG [*picks himself up—hysterically*]. I'll pop off then. This ain't what I meant. And whatever 'appens, yer can't blame me. [*He slinks off left.*]

YANK. T' hell! wit youse! [*He approaches a lady—with a vicious grin and a smirking wink.*] Hello, Kiddo. How's every little ting? Got anyting on for tonight? I know an old boiler down to de docks we kin crawl into. [*The lady stalks by without a look, without a change of pace. YANK turns to others—insultingly.*] Holy smokes, what a mug! Go hide yuhself before de horses shy at yuh. Gee, pipe de heine on dat one! Say, youse, yuh look like de stoin of a ferryboat. Paint and powder! All dolled up to kill! Yuh look like stiffs laid out for de boneyard! Aw, g'wan, de lot of youse! Yuh give me de eye-ache. Yuh don't belong, get me! Look at me, why don't youse dare? I belong, dat's me! [*Pointing to a skyscraper across the street which is in process of construction—with bravado.*] See dat building goin' up dere? See de steel work? Steel, dat's me! Youse guys live on it and tink yuh're somep'n. But I'm in it, see! I'm de hoistin' engine dat makes it go up! I'm it—de inside and bottom of it! Sure! I'm steel and steam and smoke and de rest of it! It moves—speed—twenty-five stories up—and me at

de top and bottom—movin'! Youse simps don't move. Yuh're on'y dolls I winds up to see 'm spin. Yuh're de garbage, get me—de leavins—de ashes we dump over de side! Now, what 'a' yuh gotta say? [*But as they seem neither to see nor hear him, he flies into a fury.*] Burns! Pigs! Tarts! Bitches! [*He turns in a rage on the men, bumping viciously into them but not jarring them the least bit. Rather it is he who recoils after each collision. He keeps growling.*] Git off de oith! G'wan, yuh bum! Look where yuh're goin', can't yuh? Git outa here! Fight, why don't yuh? Put up yer mits! Don't be a dog! Fight or I'll knock yuh dead! [*But, without seeming to see him, they all answer with mechanical affected politeness*]: I beg your pardon. [*Then at a cry from one of the women, they all scurry to the furrier's window.*]

THE WOMAN [*ecstatically, with a gasp of delight*]. Monkey fur! [*The whole crowd of men and women chorus after her in the same tone of affected delight*]: Monkey fur!

YANK [*with a jerk of his head back on his shoulders, as if he had received a punch full in the face—raging*]. I see yuh, all in white! I see yuh, yuh white-faced tart, yuh! Hairy ape, huh? I'll hairy ape yuh! [*He bends down and grips at the street curbing as if to pluck it out and hurl it. Foiled in this, snarling with passion, he leaps to the lamp-post on the corner and tries to pull it up for a club. Just at that moment a bus is heard rumbling up. A fat, high-hatted, spatted gentleman runs out from the side street. He calls out plaintively*]: Bus! Bus! Stop there! [*and runs full tilt into the bending, straining YANK, who is bowled off his balance.*]

YANK [*seeing a fight—with a roar of joy as he springs to his feet*]. At last! Bus, huh? I'll bust yuh! [*He lets drive a ter-*

## *The Individual in a World Society*

rific swing, his fist landing full on the fat gentleman's face. But the gentleman stands unmoved as if nothing had happened.]

GENTLEMAN. I beg your pardon. [Then irritably.] You have made me lose my bus. [He claps his hands and begins to scream.] Officer! Officer! [Many police whistles shrill out on the instant and a whole

platoon of policemen rush in on YANK from all sides. He tries to fight but is clubbed to the pavement and fallen upon. The crowd at the window have not moved or noticed this disturbance. The clanging gong of the patrol wagon approaches with a clamoring din.]

CURTAIN

### SCENE VI

[Night of the following day. A row of cells in the prison on Blackwells Island. The cells extend back diagonally from right front to left rear. They do not stop, but disappear in the dark background as if they ran on, numberless, into infinity. One electric bulb from the low ceiling of the narrow corridor sheds its light through the heavy steel bars of the cell at the extreme front and reveals part of the interior. YANK can be seen within, crouched on the edge of his cot in the attitude of Rodin's "The Thinker." His face is spotted with black and blue bruises. A blood-stained bandage is wrapped around his head.]

YANK [suddenly starting as if awakening from a dream, reaches out and shakes the bars—aloud to himself, wondering]. Steel. Dis is de Zoo, huh? [A burst of hard, barking laughter comes from the unseen occupants of the cells, runs back down the tier, and abruptly ceases.]

VOICES [mockingly]. The Zoo? That's a new name for this coop—a damn good name! Steel, eh? You said a mouthful. This is the old iron house. Who is that boob talkin'? He's the bloke they brung in out of his head. The bulls had beat him up fierce.

YANK [dully]. I musta been dreamin'. I tought I was in a cage at de Zoo—but de apes don't talk, do dey?

VOICES [with mocking laughter]. You're in a cage aw right.

A coop!

A pen!

A sty!

A kennel! [Hard laughter—a pause.]

Say, guy! Who are you? No, never mind lying. What are you?

Yes, tell us your sad story. What's your game?

What did they jug yuh for?

YANK [dully]. I was a fireman—stokin' on de liners. [Then with sudden rage, rattling his cell bars.] I'm a hairy ape, get me? And I'll bust youse all in de jaw if yuh don't lay off kiddin' me.

VOICES. Huh! You're a hard boiled duck, ain't you!

When you spit, it bounces! [Laughter.] Aw, can it. He's a regular guy. Ain't you? What did he say he was—a ape?

YANK [defiantly]. Sure ting! Ain't dat what youse all are—apes? [A silence. Then a furious rattling of bars from down the corridor.]

A VOICE [thick with rage]. I'll show yuh who's a ape, yuh bum!

VOICES. Ssshh! Nix!

Can de noise!

Pianol

*"The Hairy Ape"*

You'll have the guard down on us!

YANK [*scornfully*]. De guard? Yuh mean de keeper, don't yuh? [*Angry exclamations from all the cells.*]

VOICE [*placatingly*]. Aw, don't pay no attention to him. He's off his nut from the beatin'-up he got. Say, you guy! We're waitin' to hear what they landed you for—or ain't yuh tellin'?

YANK. Sure, I'll tell youse. Sure! Why de hell not? On'y—youse won't get me. Nobody gets me but me, see? I started to tell de Judge and all he says was: "Toity days to tink it over." Tink it over! Christ, dat's all I been doin' for weeks! [*After a pause.*] I was tryin' to git even wit someone, see?—someone dat done me doit.

VOICES [*cynically*]. De old stuff, I bet.

Your goil, huh?

Give yuh the double-cross, huh?

That's them every time!

Did yuh beat up de odder guy?

YANK [*disgustedly*]. Aw, yuh're all wrong! Sure dere was a skoit in it—but not what youse mean, not dat old tripe. Dis was a new kind of skoit. She was dolled up all in white—in de stokehole. I tought she was a ghost. Sure. [*A pause.*]

VOICES [*whispering*]. Gee, he's still nutty.

Let him rave. It's fun listenin'.

YANK [*unheeding—groping in his thoughts*]. Her hands—dey was skinny and white like dey wasn't real but painted on somep'n. Dere was a million miles from me to her—twenty-five knots a hour. She was like some dead ting de cat brung in. Sure, dat's what. She didn't belong. She belonged in de window of a toy store, or on de top of a garbage can, see! Sure! [*He breaks out angrily.*] But would yuh believe it, she had de noive to do me doit. She lamped me like she was seein' somep'n broke loose from de menagerie. Christ, yuh'd oughter seen her eyes! [*He rattles*

*the bars of his cell furiously.*] But I'll get back at her yet, you watch! And if I can't find her I'll take it out on de gang she runs wit. I'm wise to where dey hangs out now. I'll show her who belongs! I'll show her who's in de move and who ain't. You watch my smoke!

VOICES [*serious and joking*]. Dat's de talkin'!

Take her for all she's got!

What was this dame, anyway? Who was she, eh?

YANK. I dunno. First cabin stiff. Her old man's a millionaire, dey says—name of Douglas.

VOICES. Douglas? That's the president of the Steel Trust, I bet.

Sure. I seen his mug in de papers.

He's filthy with dough.

VOICE. Hey, feller, take a tip from me. If you want to get back at that dame, you better join the Wobblies. You'll get some action then.

YANK. Wobblies? What de hell's dat?

VOICE. Ain't you ever heard of the I. W. W.?

YANK. Naw. What is it?

VOICE. A gang of blokes—a tough gang. I been readin' about 'em today in the paper. The guard give me the *Sunday Times*. There's a long spiel about 'em. It's from a speech made in the Senate by a guy named Senator Queen. [*He is in the cell next to YANK's. There is a rustling of paper.*] Wait'll I see if I got light enough and I'll read you. Listen. [*He reads.*] "There is a menace existing in this country today which threatens the vitals of our fair Republic—as foul a menace against the very life-blood of the American Eagle as was the foul conspiracy of Catiline against the eagles of ancient Rome!"

VOICE [*disgustedly*]. Aw, hell! Tell him to salt de tail of dat eagle!

## *The Individual in a World Society*

VOICE [reading]. "I refer to that devil's brew of rascals, jailbirds, murderers and cutthroats who libel all honest working men by calling themselves the Industrial Workers of the World; but in the light of their nefarious plots, I call them the Industrious *Wreckers* of the World!"

YANK [with *vengeful satisfaction*]. Wreckers, dat's de right dope! Dat belongs! Me for dem!

VOICE. Ssshh! [Reading.] "This fiendish organization is a foul ulcer on the fair body of our Democracy—"

VOICE. Democracy, hell! Give him the boid, fellers—the raspberry! [They do.]

VOICE. Ssshh! [Reading.] "Like Cato I say to this Senate, the I. W. W. must be destroyed! For they represent an ever-present dagger pointed at the heart of the greatest nation the world has ever known, where all men are born free and equal, with equal opportunities to all, where the Founding Fathers have guaranteed to each one happiness, where Truth, Honor, Liberty, Justice, and the Brotherhood of Man are a religion absorbed with one's mother's milk, taught at our father's knee, sealed, signed, and stamped upon in the glorious Constitution of these United States!" [A perfect storm of hisses, cat-calls, boos, and hard laughter.]

VOICES [scornfully]. Hurrah for de Fort' of July!

Pass de hat!

Liberty!

Justice!

Honor!

Opportunity!

Brotherhood!

ALL [with *abysmal scorn*]. Aw, hell!

VOICE. Give that Queen Senator guy the bark. All togedder now—one—two—tree— [A terrific chorus of barking and yapping.]

GUARD [from a distance]. Quiet there, youse—or I'll git the hose. [The noise subsides.]

YANK [with *growling rage*]. I'd like to catch dat senator guy alone for a second. I'd loin him some trute!

VOICE. Ssshh! Here's where he gits down to cases on the Wobblies. [Reads.] "They plot with fire in one hand and dynamite in the other. They stop not before murder to gain their ends, nor at the outraging of defenseless womanhood. They would tear down society, put the lowest scum in the seats of the mighty, turn Almighty God's revealed plan for the world topsy-turvy, and make of our sweet and lovely civilization a shambles, a desolation where man, God's masterpiece, would soon degenerate back to the ape!"

VOICE [to YANK]. Hey, you guy. There's your ape stuff again.

YANK [with a growl of fury]. I got him. So dey blow up tings, do dey? Dey turn tings round, do dey? Hey, lend me dat paper, will yuh?

VOICE. Sure. Give it to him. On'y keep it to yourself, sec. We don't wanten listen to no more of that slop.

VOICE. Here you are. Hide it under your mattress.

YANK [reaching out]. Tanks. I can't read much but I kin manage. [He sits, the paper in the hand at his side, in the attitude of Rodin's "The Thinker." A pause. Several snores from down the corridor. Suddenly YANK jumps to his feet with a furious groan as if some appalling thought had crashed on him—bewilderedly.] Sure—her old man—president of de Steel Trust—makes half de steel in de world—steel—where I tought I belonged—drivin' trou—movin'—in dat—to make her—and cage me in for her to spit on!

## "The Hairy Ape"

Christ! [*He shakes the bars of his cell door till the whole tier trembles. Irritated, protesting exclamations from those awakened or trying to get to sleep.*] He made dis—dis cage! Steel! It don't belong, dat's what! Cages, cells, locks, bolts, bars—dat's what it means!—holdin' me down with him at de top! But I'll drive trou! Fire, dat melts it! I'll be fire—under de heap—fire dat never goes out—hot as hell—breakin' out in de night—[*While he has been saying this last he has shaken his cell door to a clanging accompaniment. As he comes to the "breakin' out" he seizes one bar with both hands and, putting his two feet up against the others so that his position is parallel to the floor like a monkey's, he gives a great wrench backwards. The bar bends like a licorice stick under his tremendous strength. Just at this moment the*

PRISON GUARD rushes in, dragging a hose behind him.]

GUARD [*angrily*]. I'll loin youse bums to wake me up! [*Sees YANK.*] Hello, it's you, huh? Got the D. Ts., hey? Well, I'll cure 'em. I'll drown your snakes for yuh! [*Noticing the bar.*] Hell, look at dat bar bended! On'y a bug is strong enough for dat!

YANK [*glaring at him*]. Or a hairy ape, yuh big yellow bum! Look out! Here I come! [*He grabs another bar.*]

GUARD [*scared now—yelling off left*]. Toin de hose on, Ben!—full pressure! And call de others—and a straitjacket! [*The curtain is falling. As it hides YANK from view, there is a splattering smash as the stream of water hits the steel of YANK's cell.*]

CURTAIN

## SCENE VII

[*Nearly a month later. An I. W. W. local near the waterfront, showing the interior of a front room on the ground floor, and the street outside. Moonlight on the narrow street, buildings massed in black shadow. The interior of the room, which is general assembly room, office, and reading roqm, resembles some dingy settlement boys' club. A desk and high stool are in one corner. A table with papers, stacks of pamphlets, chairs about it, is at center. The whole is decidedly cheap, banal, commonplace and unmysterious as a room could well be. The secretary is perched on the stool making entries in a large ledger. An eye shade casts his face into shadows. Eight or ten men, long-shoremen, iron workers, and the like, are grouped about the table. Two are playing checkers. One is writing a letter. Most of them are smoking pipes. A big signboard*

*is on the wall at the rear, "Industrial Workers of the World—Local No. 57."*]

YANK [*comes down the street outside. He is dressed as in Scene Five. He moves cautiously, mysteriously. He comes to a point opposite the door; tiptoes softly up to it, listens, is impressed by the silence within, knocks carefully, as if he were guessing at the password to some secret rite. Listens. No answer. Knocks again a bit louder. No answer. Knocks impatiently, much louder.*]

SECRETARY [*turning around on his stool*]. What the hell is that—someone knocking? [*Shouts.*] Come in, why don't you? [*All the men in the room look up. YANK opens the door slowly, gingerly, as if afraid of an ambush. He looks around for secret doors, mystery, is taken aback by the commonplaceness of the room and the men*



## *The Individual in a World Society*

*in it, thinks he may have gotten in the wrong place, then sees the signboard on the wall and is reassured.]*

YANK [*blurts out*]. Hello.

MEN [*reservedly*]. Hello.

YANK [*more easily*]. I tought I'd bumped into de wrong dump.

SECRETARY [*scrutinizing him carefully*]. Maybe you have. Are you a member?

YANK. Naw, not yet. Dat's what I come for—to join.

SECRETARY. That's easy. What's your job—longshore?

YANK. Naw. Fireman—stoker on de liners.

SECRETARY [*with satisfaction*]. Welcome to our city. Glad to know you people are waking up at last. We haven't got many members in your line.

YANK. Naw. Dey're all dead to de woild.

SECRETARY. Well, you can help to wake 'em. What's your name? I'll make out your card.

YANK [*confused*]. Name? Lemme tink.

SECRETARY [*sharply*]. Don't you know your own name?

YANK. Sure; but I been just Yank for so long—Bob, dat's it—Bob Smith.

SECRETARY [*writing*]. Robert Smith. [*Fills out the rest of card.*] Here you are. Cost you half a dollar.

YANK. Is dat all—four bits? Dat's easy. [*Gives the Secretary the money.*]

SECRETARY [*throwing it in drawer*]. Thanks. Well, make yourself at home. No introductions needed. There's literature on the table. Take some of those pamphlets with you to distribute aboard ship. They may bring results. Sow the seed, only go about it right. Don't get caught and fired. We got plenty out of work. What we need is men who can hold their jobs—and work for us at the same time.

YANK. Sure. [*But he still stands, embarrassed and uneasy.*]

SECRETARY [*looking at him—curiously*]. What did you knock for? Think we had a coon in uniform to open doors?

YANK. Naw. I tought it was locked—and dat yuh'd wanter give me the once-over trou a peep-hole or somep'n to see if I was right.

SECRETARY [*alert and suspicious but with an easy laugh*]. Think we were running a crap game? That door is never locked. What put that in your nut?

YANK [*with a knowing grin, convinced that this is all camouflage, a part of the secrecy*]. Dis burg is full of bulls, ain't it?

SECRETARY [*sharply*]. What have the cops got to do with us? We're breaking no laws.

YANK [*with a knowing wink*]. Sure. Youse wouldn't for woilds. Sure. I'm wise to dat.

SECRETARY. You seem to be wise to a lot of stuff none of us knows about.

YANK [*with another wink*]. Aw, dat's aw right, see. [*Then made a bit resentful by the suspicious glances from all sides.*] Aw, can it! Youse needn't put me trou de toid degree. Can't youse see I belong? Sure! I'm reg'lar. I'll stick, get me? I'll shoot de woiks for youse. Dat's why I wanted to join in.

SECRETARY [*breezily, feeling him out*]. That's the right spirit. Only are you sure you understand what you've joined? It's all plain and above board; still, some guys get a wrong slant on us. [*Sharply.*] What's your notion of the purpose of the I. W. W.?

YANK. Aw, I know all about it.

SECRETARY [*sarcastically*]. Well, give us some of your valuable information.

YANK [*cunningly*]. I know enough not to speak outa my toin. [*Then resentfully*

## "The Hairy Ape"

again.] Aw, say! I'm reg'lar. I'm wise to de game. I know yuh got to watch your step wit a stranger. For all youse know, I might be a plain-clothes dick, or somep'n, dat's what yuh're tinkin', huh? Aw, forget it! I belong, see? Ask any guy down to de docks if I don't.

SECRETARY. Who said you didn't?

YANK. After I'm 'nitiated, I'll show yuh.

SECRETARY [*astounded*]. Initiated? There's no initiation.

YANK [*disappointed*]. Ain't there no password—no grip nor nothin'?

SECRETARY. What'd you think this is—the Elks—or the Black Hand?

YANK. De Elks, hell! De Black Hand, dey're a lot of yellow back-stickin' Ginees. Naw. Dis is a man's gang, ain't it?

SECRETARY. You said it! That's why we stand on our two feet in the open. We got no secrets.

YANK [*surprised but admiringly*]. Yuh mean to say yuh always run wide open—like dis?

SECRETARY. Exactly.

YANK. Den yuh sure got your noive wit youse!

SECRETARY [*sharply*]. Just what was it made you want to join us? Come out with that straight.

YANK. Yuh call me? Well, I got noive, too! Here's my hand. Yuh wanter blow tings up, don't yuh? Well, dat's me! I belong!

SECRETARY [*with pretended carelessness*]. You mean change the unequal conditions of society by legitimate direct action—or with dynamite?

YANK. Dynamite! Blow it offen de oith—steel—all de cages—all de factories, steamers, buildings, jails—de Steel Trust and all dat makes it go.

SECRETARY. So—that's your idea, eh? And did you have any special job in that

line you wanted to propose to us? [*He makes a sign to the men, who get up cautiously, one by one and group behind YANK.*]

YANK [*boldly*]. Sure, I'll come out wit it. I'll show youse I'm one of de gang. Dere's dat millionaire guy, Douglas—

SECRETARY. President of the Steel Trust, you mean? Do you want to assassinate him?

YANK. Naw, dat don't get yuh nothin'. I mean blow up de factory, de woiks, where he makes de steel. Dat's what I'm after—to blow up de steel, knock all de steel in de woild up to de moon. Dat'll fix tings! [*Eagerly, with a touch of bravado.*] I'll do it by me lonesome! I'll show yuh! Tell me where his woiks is, how to git there, all de dope. Gimme de stuff, de old butter—and watch me do de rest! Watch de smoke and see it move! I don't give a damn if dey nab me—long as it's done! I'll soive life for it—and give 'em de laugh! [*Half to himself.*] And I'll write her a letter and tell her de hairy ape done it. Dat'll square tings.

SECRETARY [*stepping away from YANK*]. Very interesting. [*He gives a signal. The men, huskies all, throw themselves on YANK and before he knows it they have his legs and arms pinioned. But he is too flabbergasted to make a struggle, anyway. They feel him over for weapons.*]

MAN. No gat, no knife. Shall we give him what's what and put the boots to him?

SECRETARY. No. He isn't worth the trouble we'd get into. He's too stupid. [*He comes closer and laughs mockingly in YANK's face.*] Ho-ho! By God, this is the biggest joke they've put up on us yet. Hey, you Joke! Who sent you—Burns or Pinkerton? No, by God, you're such a bonehead I'll bet you're in the Secret Ser-

## *The Individual in a World Society*

vice! Well, you dirty spy, you rotten agent provocator, you can go back and tell whatever skunk is paying you blood-money for betraying your brothers that he's wasting his coin. You couldn't catch a cold. And tell him that all he'll ever get on us, or ever has got, is just his own sneaking plots that he's framed up to put us in jail. We are what our manifesto says we are, neither more nor less—and we'll give him a copy of that any time he calls. And as for you— [*He glares scornfully at YANK, who is sunk in an oblivious stupor.*] Oh, hell, what's the use of talking? You're a brainless ape.

YANK [*aroused by the word to fierce but futile struggles*]. What's dat, yuh Sheeny bum, yuh!

SECRETARY. Throw him out, boys. [*In spite of his struggles, this is done with gusto and éclat. Propelled by several parting kicks, YANK lands sprawling in the middle of the narrow cobbled street. With a growl he starts to get up and storm the closed door, but stops bewildered by the confusion in his brain, pathetically impotent. He sits there, brooding, in as near to the attitude of Rodin's "Thinker" as he can get in his position.*]

YANK [*bitterly*]. So dem boids don't tink I belong, neider. Aw, to hell wit 'em! Dey're in de wrong pew—de same old bull—soapboxes and Salvation Army—no guts! Cut out an hour offen de job a day and make me happy! Gimme a dollar more a day and make me happy! Tree square a day, and cauliflowers in de front yard—ekal rights—a woman and kids—a lousy vote—and I'm all fixed for Jesus, huh? Aw, hell! What does dat get yuh? Dis ting's in your inside, but it ain't your belly. Feedin' your face—sinkers

and coffee—dat don't touch it. It's way down—at de bottom. Yuh can't grab it, and yuh can't stop it. It moves, and everything moves. It stops and de whole woild stops. Dat's me now—I don't tick, see?—I'm a busted Ingersoll, dat's what. Steel was me, and I owned de woild. Now I ain't steel, and de woild owns me. Aw, hell! I can't see—it's all dark, get me? It's all wrong! [*He turns a bitter mocking face up like an ape gibbering at the moon.*] Say, youse up dere, Man in de Moon, yuh look so wise, gimme de answer, huh? Slip me de inside dope, de information right from de stable—where do I get off at, huh?

A POLICEMAN [*who has come up the street in time to hear this last—with grim humor*]. You'll get off at the station, you boob, if you don't get up out of that and keep movin'.

YANK [*looking up at him—with a hard, bitter laugh*]. Sure! Lock me up! Put me in a cage! Dat's de on'y answer yuh know. G'wan, lock me up!

POLICEMAN. What you been doin'?

YANK. Enuf to gimme life for! I was born, see? Sure, dat's de charge. Write it in de blotter. I was born, get me!

POLICEMAN [*jocosely*]. God pity your old woman! [*Then matter-of-fact.*] But I've no time for kidding. You're soused. I'd run you in but it's too long a walk to the station. Come on now, get up, or I'll fan your ears with this club. Beat it now! [*He hauls YANK to his feet.*]

YANK [*in a vague mocking tone*]. Say, where do I go from here?

POLICEMAN [*giving him a push—with a grin, indifferently*]. Go to hell.

CURTAIN

## "The Hairy Ape"

### SCENE VIII

[*Twilight of the next day. The monkey house at the Zoo. One spot of clear gray light falls on the front of one cage so that the interior can be seen. The other cages are vague, shrouded in shadow from which chatterings pitched in a conversational tone can be heard. On the one cage a sign from which the word "gorilla" stands out. The gigantic animal himself is seen squatting on his haunches on a bench in much the same attitude as Rodin's "Thinker." YANK enters from the left. Immediately a chorus of angry chattering and screeching breaks out. The gorilla turns his eyes but makes no sound or move.*]

YANK [*with a hard, bitter laugh*]. Welcome to your city, huh? Hail, hail, de gang's all here! [*At the sound of his voice the chattering dies away into an attentive silence. YANK walks up to the gorilla's cage and, leaning over the railing, stares in at its occupant, who stares back at him, silent and motionless. There is a pause of dead stillness. Then YANK begins to talk in a friendly confidential tone, half-mockingly, but with a deep undercurrent of sympathy.*] Say, yuh're some hard-lookin' guy, ain't yuh? I seen lots of tough nuts dat de gang called gorillas, but yuh're de foist real one I ever seen. Some chest yuh got, and shoulders, and dem arms and mits! I bet yuh got a punch in eider fist dat'd knock 'em all silly! [*This with genuine admiration. The gorilla, as if he understood, stands upright, swelling out his chest and pounding on it with his fist. YANK grins sympathetically.*] Sure, I get yuh. Yuh challenge de whole woild, huh? Yuh got what I was sayin' even if yuh muffed de woids. [*Then bitterness creeping in.*] And why wouldn't yuh get me?

Ain't we both members of de same club—de Hairy Apes? [*They stare at each other—a pause—then YANK goes on slowly and bitterly.*] So yuh're what she seen when she looked at me, de white-faced tart! I was you to her, get me? On'y outa de cage—broke out—free to moider her, see? Sure! Dat's what she tought. She wasn't wise dat I was in a cage, too—worser'n yours—sure—a damn sight—'cause you got some chanct to bust loose—but me— [*He grows confused.*] Aw, hell! It's all wrong, ain't it? [*A pause.*] I s'pose yuh wanter know what I'm doin' here, huh? I been warmin' a bench down to de Battery—ever since last night. Sure. I seen de sun come up. Dat was pretty, too—all red and pink and green. I was lookin' at de skyscrapers—steel—and all de ships comin' in, sailin' out, all over de oith—and dey was steel, too. De sun was warm, dey wasn't no clouds, and dere was a breeze blowin'. Sure, it was great stuff. I got it aw right—what Paddy said about dat bein' de right dope—on'y I couldn't get in it, see? I couldn't belong in dat. It was over my head. And I kept tinkin'—and den I beat it up here to see what youse was like. And I waited till dey was all gone to git yuh alone. Say, how d'yuh feel sittin' in dat pen all de time, havin' to stand for 'em comin' and starin' at yuh—de white-faced, skinny tarts and de boobs what marry 'em—makin' fun of yuh, laughin' at yuh, gittin' scared of yuh—damn 'em! [*He pounds on the rail with his fist. The gorilla rattles the bars of his cage and snarls. All the other monkeys set up an angry chattering in the darkness. YANK goes on excitedly.*] Sure! Dat's de way it hits me, too. On'y yuh're lucky, see? Yuh don't belong wit

## *The Individual in a World Society*

'em and yuh know it. But me, I belong wit 'em—but I don't, see? Dey don't belong wit me, dat's what. Get me? Tinkin' is hard— [*He passes one hand across his forehead with a painful gesture. The gorilla growls impatiently. YANK goes on groping.*] It's dis way, what I'm drivin' at. Youse can sit and dope dream in de past, green woods, de jungle and de rest of it. Den yuh belong and dey don't. Den yuh kin laugh at 'em, see? Yuh're de champ of de woild. But me—I ain't got no past to tink in, nor nothin' dat's comin', on'y what's now—and dat don't belong. Sure, yuh're de best off! Yuh can't tink, can yuh? Yuh can't talk neider. But I kin make a bluff at talkin' and tinkin'—a'most git away wit it—a'most!—and dat's where de joker comes in. [*He laughs.*] I ain't on oith and I ain't in heaven, get me? I'm in de middle tryin' to separate 'em, takin' all de woist punches from bot' of 'em. Maybe dat's what dey call hell, huh? But you, yuh're at de bottom. You belong! Sure! Yuh're de on'y one in de woild dat does, yuh lucky stiff! [*The gorilla growls proudly.*] And dat's why dey gotter put yuh in a cage, see? [*The gorilla roars angrily.*] Sure! Yuh get me. It beats it when you try to tink it or talk it—it's way down—deep—behind—you 'n' me we feel it. Sure! Bot' members of dis club! [*He laughs—then in a savage tone.*] What de hell! T' hell wit it! A little action, dat's our meat! Dat belongs! Knock 'em down and keep bustin' 'em till dey croaks yuh wit a gat—wit steel; Sure! Are yuh game? Dey've looked at youse, ain't dey—in a cage? Wanter git even? Wanter wind up like a sport 'stead of croakin' slow in dere? [*The gorilla roars an emphatic affirmative. YANK goes on with a sort of furious exaltation.*] Sure! Yuh're reg'lar! Yuh'll stick to de

finish! Me 'n' you, huh?—bot' members of this club! We'll put up one last star bout dat'll knock 'em offen deir seats! Dey'll have to make de cages stronger after we're trou! [*The gorilla is straining at his bars, growling, hopping from one foot to the other. YANK takes a jimmy from under his coat and forces the lock on the cage door. He throws this open.*] Pardon from de governor! Step out and shake hands. I'll take yuh for a walk down Fif' Avenoo. We'll knock 'em offen de oith and croak wit de band playin'. Come on, Brother. [*The gorilla scrambles gingerly out of his cage. Goes to YANK and stands looking at him. YANK keeps his mocking tone—holds out his hand.*] Shake—de secret grip of our order. [*Something, the tone of mockery, perhaps, suddenly enrages the animal. With a spring he wraps his huge arms around YANK in a murderous hug. There is a crackling snap of crushed ribs—a gasping cry, still mocking, from YANK.*] Hey, I didn't say kiss me! [*The gorilla lets the crushed body slip to the floor; stands over it uncertainly, considering; then picks it up, throws it in the cage, shuts the door, and shuffles off menacingly into the darkness at left. A great uproar of frightened chattering and whimpering comes from the other cages. Then YANK moves, groaning, opening his eyes, and there is silence. He mutters painfully.*] Say—dey oughter match him—wit Zybszko. He got me, aw right. I'm trou. Even him didn't tink I belonged. [*Then, with sudden passionate despair.*] Christ, where do I get off at? Where do I fit in? [*Checking himself as suddenly.*] Aw, what de hell! No squawkin', see! No quittin', get me! Croak wit your boots on! [*He grabs hold of the bars of the cage and hauls himself painfully to his feet—*

## A Day's Work

looks around him bewilderedly—forces a mocking laugh.] In de cage, huh? [In the strident tones of a circus barker.] Ladies and gents, step forward and take a slant at de one and only— [His voice weakening.] —one and original—Hairy Ape from

de wilds of— [He slips in a heap on the floor and dies. The monkeys set up a chattering, whimpering wail. And, perhaps, the Hairy Ape at last belongs.]

CURTAIN

## A DAY'S WORK

by KATHERINE ANNE PORTER

THE DULL SCRAMBLING like a giant rat in the wall meant the dumb-waiter was on its way up, the janitress below hauling on the cable. Mrs. Halloran paused, thumped her iron on the board, and said, "There it is. Late. You could have put on your shoes and gone around the corner and brought the things an hour ago. I can't do everything."

Mr. Halloran pulled himself out of the chair, clutching the arms and heaving to his feet slowly, looking around as if he hoped to find crutches standing near. "Wearing out your socks, too," added Mrs. Halloran. "You ought either go barefoot outright or wear your shoes over your socks as God intended," she said. "Sock feet. What's the good of it, I'd like to know? Neither one thing nor the other."

She unrolled a salmon-colored chiffon nightgown with cream-colored lace and broad ribbons on it, gave it a light flirt in the air, and spread it on the board. "God's mercy, look at that indecent thing," she said. She thumped the iron again and pushed it back and forth over the rumpled cloth. "You might just set the things in the cupboard," she said, "and not leave them around on the floor. You might just."

Mr. Halloran took a sack of potatoes

from the dumb-waiter and started for the cupboard in the corner next the icebox. "You might as well take a load," said Mrs. Halloran. "There's no need on earth making a half-dozen trips back and forth. I'd think the poorest sort of man could well carry more than five pounds of potatoes at one time. But maybe not."

Her voice tapped on Mr. Halloran's ears like wood on wood. "Mind your business, will you?" he asked, not speaking to her directly. He carried on the argument with himself. "Oh, I couldn't do that, Mister Honey," he answered in a dull falsetto. "Don't ever ask me to think of such a thing, even. It wouldn't be right," he said, standing still with his knees bent, glaring bitterly over the potato sack at the scrawny strange woman he had never liked, that one standing there ironing clothes with a dirty look on her whole face like a suffering saint. "I may not be much good any more," he told her in his own voice, "but I still have got wits enough to take groceries off a dumb-waiter, mind you."

"That's a miracle," said Mrs. Halloran. "I'm thankful for that much."

"There's the telephone," said Mr. Halloran, sitting in the armchair again and taking his pipe out of his shirt pocket.

"I heard it as well," said Mrs. Halloran,

From *The Leaning Tower and Other Stories*, copyright, 1944, by Katherine Anne Porter. By permission of Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc.

## *The Individual in a World Society*

sliding the iron up and down over the salmon-colored chifton.

"It's for you, I've no further business in this world," said Mr. Halloran. His little greenish eyes glittered; he exposed his two sharp dogteeth in a grin.

"You could answer it. It could be the wrong number again or for somebody downstairs," said Mrs. Halloran, her flat voice going flatter, even.

"Let it go in any case," decided Mr. Halloran, "for my own part, that is." He struck a match on the arm of his chair, touched off his pipe, and drew in his first puff while the telephone went on with its nagging.

"It might be Maggie again," said Mrs. Halloran.

"Let her ring, then," said Mr. Halloran, settling back and crossing his legs.

"God help a man who won't answer the telephone when his own daughter calls up for a word," commented Mrs. Halloran to the ceiling. "And she in deep trouble, too, with her husband treating her like a dog about the money, and sitting out late nights in saloons with that crowd from the Little Tammany Association. He's getting into politics now with the McCorkery gang. No good will come of it, and I told her as much."

"She's no troubles at all, her man's a sharp fellow who will get ahead if she'll let him alone," said Mr. Halloran. "She's nothing to complain of, I could tell her. But what's a father?" Mr. Halloran cocked his head toward the window that opened on the brick-paved areaway and crowed like a rooster, "What's a father these days and who would heed his advice?"

"You needn't tell the neighbors, there's disgrace enough already," said Mrs. Halloran. She set the iron back on the gas ring and stepped out to the telephone on

the first stair landing. Mr. Halloran leaned forward, his thin, red-haired hands hanging loosely between his knees, his warm pipe sending up its good decent smell right into his nose. The woman hated the pipe and the smell; she was a woman born to make any man miserable. Before the depression, while he still had a good job and prospects of a raise, before he went on relief, before she took in fancy washing and ironing, in the Good Days Before, God's pity, she didn't exactly keep her mouth shut, there wasn't a word known to man she couldn't find an answer for, but she knew which side her bread was buttered on, and put up with it. Now she was, you might say, buttering her own bread and she never forgot it for a minute. And it's her own fault we're not riding round today in a limousine with ash trays and a speaking tube and a cut-glass vase for flowers in it. It's what a man gets for marrying one of these holy women. Gerald McCorkery had told him as much, in the beginning.

"There's a girl will spend her time holding you down," Gerald had told him. "You're putting your head in a noose will strangle the life out of you. Heed the advice of one who wishes you well," said Gerald McCorkery. This was after he had barely set eyes on Lacey Mahaffy one Sunday morning in Coney Island. It was like McCorkery to see that in a flash, born judge of human nature that he was. He could look a man over, size him up, and there was an end to it. And if the man didn't pass muster, McCorkery could ease him out in a way that man would never know how it happened. It was the secret of McCorkery's success in the world.

"This is Rosie, herself," said Gerald that Sunday in Coney Island. "Meet the future Mrs. Gerald J. McCorkery." Lacey Ma-

huffy's narrow face had gone sour as whey under her big straw hat. She barely nodded to Rosie, who gave Mr. Halloran a look that fairly undressed him right there. Mr. Halloran had thought, too, that McCorkery was picking a strange one; she was good-looking all right, but she had the smell of a regular little Fourteenth Street hustler if Halloran knew anything about women. "Come on," said McCorkery, his arm around Rosie's waist, "let's all go on the roller coaster." But Lacey would not. She said, "No, thank you. We didn't plan to stay, and we must go now." On the way home Mr. Halloran said, "Lacey, you judge too harshly. Maybe that's a nice girl at heart; hasn't had your opportunities." Lacey had turned upon him a face ugly as an angry cat's, and said, "She's a loose, low woman, and 'twas an insult to introduce her to me." It was a good while before the pretty fresh face that Mr. Halloran had fallen in love with returned to her.

Next day in Billy's Place, after three drinks each, McCorkery said, "Watch your step, Halloran; think of your future. There's a straight good girl I don't doubt, but she's no sort of mixer. A man getting into politics needs a wife who can meet all kinds. A man needs a woman knows how to loosen her corsets and sit easy."

Mrs. Halloran's voice was going on in the hall, a steady dry rattle like old newspapers blowing on a park bench. "I told you before it's no good coming to me with your troubles now. I warned you in time but you wouldn't listen. . . . I told you just how it would be, I tried my best. . . . No, you couldn't listen, you always knew better than your mother. . . . So now all you've got to do is stand by your married vows and make the best of it. . . . Now listen to me, if you want him-

self to do right you have to do right first. The woman has to do right first, and then if the man won't do right in turn it's no fault of hers. You do right whether he does wrong or no, just because he does wrong is no excuse for you."

"Ah, will you hear that?" Mr. Halloran asked the areaway in an awed voice. "There's a holy terror of a saint for you."

". . . the woman has to do right first, I'm telling you," said Mrs. Halloran into the telephone, "and then if he's a devil in spite of it, why she has to do right without any help from him." Her voice rose so the neighbors could get an earful if they wanted. "I know you from old, you're just like your father. You must be doing something wrong yourself or you wouldn't be in this fix. You're doing wrong this minute, calling over the telephone when you ought to be getting your work done. I've got an iron on, working over the dirty nightgowns of a kind of woman I wouldn't soil my foot on if I'd had a man to take care of me. So now you do up your housework and dress yourself and take a walk in the fresh air. . . ."

"A little fresh air never hurt anybody," commented Mr. Halloran loudly through the open window. "It's the gas gets a man down."

"Now listen to me, Maggie, that's not the way to talk over the public wires. Now you stop that crying and go and do your duty and don't be worrying me any more. And stop saying you're going to leave your husband, because where will you go, for one thing? Do you want to walk the streets or set up a laundry in your kitchen? You can't come back here, you'll stay with your husband where you belong. Don't be a fool, Maggie. You've got your living, and that's more than many a woman better than you has got. Yes,



## *The Individual in a World Society*

your father's all right. No, he's just sitting here, the same. God knows what's to become of us. But you know how he is, little he cares. . . . Now remember this, Maggie, if anything goes wrong with your married life it's your own fault and you needn't come here for sympathy. . . . I can't waste any more time on it. Good-by."

Mr. Halloran, his ears standing up for fear of missing a word, thought how Gerald J. McCorkery had gone straight on up the ladder with Rosie; and for every step the McCorkerys took upward, he, Michael Halloran, had taken a step downward with Lacey Mahaffy. They had started as greenhorns with the same chances at the same time and the same friends, but McCorkery had seized all his opportunities as they came, getting in steadily with the Big Shots in ward politics, one good thing leading to another. Rosie had known how to back him up and push him onward. The McCorkerys for years had invited him and Lacey to come over to the house and be sociable with the crowd, but Lacey would not.

"You can't run with that fast set and drink and stay out nights and hold your job," said Lacey, "and you should know better than to ask your wife to associate with that woman." Mr. Halloran had got into the habit of dropping around by himself, now and again, for McCorkery still liked him, was still willing to give him a foothold in the right places, still asked him for favors at election time. There was always a good lively crowd at the McCorkerys, wherever they were; for they moved ever so often to a better place, with more furniture. Rosie helped hand around the drinks, taking a few herself with a gay word for everybody. The player piano or the victrola would be going full blast, with everybody dancing, all looking like

ready money and a bright future. He would get home late these evenings, back to the same little cold-water walk-up flat, because Lacey would not spend a dollar for show. It must all go into savings against old age, she said. He would be full of good food and drink, and find Lacey, in a bungalow apron, warming up the fried potatoes once more, cross and bitterly silent, hanging her head and frowning at the smell of liquor on his breath. "You might at least eat the potatoes when I've fried them and waited all this time," she would say. "Ah, eat them yourself, they're none of mine," he would snarl in his disappointment with her, and with the life she was leading him.

He had believed with all his heart for years that he would one day be manager of one of the G. and I. chain grocery stores he worked for, and when that hope gave out there was still his pension when they retired him. But two years before it was due they fired him, on account of the depression, they said. Overnight he was on the sidewalk, with no place to go with the news but home. "Jesus," said Mr. Halloran, still remembering that day after nearly seven years of idleness.

The depression hadn't touched McCorkery. He went on and on up the ladder, giving beefsteaks and beanfeasts and beer parties for the boys in Billy's Place, standing in with the right men and never missing a trick. At last the Gerald J. McCorkery Club chartered a whole boat for a big excursion up the river. It was a great day, with Lacey sitting at home sulking. After election Rosie had her picture in the papers, smiling at McCorkery; not fat exactly, just a fine figure of a woman with flowers pinned on her spotted fur coat, her teeth as good as ever. Oh, God, there was a girl for

any man's money. Mr. Halloran saw out of his eye-corner the bony stooped back of Lacey Mahaffy, standing on one foot to rest the other like a tired old horse, leaning on her hands waiting for the iron to heat.

"That was Maggie, with her woes," she said.

"I hope you gave her some good advice," said Mr. Halloran. "I hope you told her to take up her hat and walk out on him."

Mrs. Halloran suspended the iron over a pair of pink satin panties. "I told her to do right and leave wrong-doing to the men," she said, in her voice like a phonograph record running down. "I told her to bear with the trouble God sends as her mother did before her."

Mr. Halloran gave a loud groan and knocked out his pipe on the chair arm. "You would ruin the world, woman, if you could, with your wicked soul, treating a new-married girl as if she had no home and no parents to come to. But she's no daughter of mine if she sits there peeling potatoes, letting a man run over her. No daughter of mine and I'll tell her so if she—"

"You know well she's your daughter, so hold your tongue," said Mrs. Halloran, "and if she heeded you she'd be walking the streets this minute. I brought her up an honest girl, and an honest woman she's going to be or I'll take her over my knee as I did when she was little. So there you are, Halloran."

Mr. Halloran leaned far back in his chair and felt along the shelf above his head until his fingers touched a half-dollar he had noticed there. His hand closed over it, he got up instantly and looked about for his hat.

"Keep your daughter, Lacey Mahaffy," he said, "she's none of mine but the fruits

of your long sinning with the Holy Ghost. And now I'm off for a little round and a couple of beers to keep my mind from dissolving entirely."

"You can't have that dollar you just now sneaked off the shelf," said Mrs. Halloran. "So you think I'm blind besides? Put it back where you found it. That's for our daily bread."

"I'm sick of bread daily," said Mr. Halloran, "I need beer. It was not a dollar, but a half-dollar as you know well."

"Whatever it was," said Mrs. Halloran, "it stands instead of a dollar to me. So just drop it."

"You've got tomorrow's potatoes sewed up in your pocket this minute, and God knows what sums in that black box wherever you hide it, besides the life savings," said Mr. Halloran. "I earned this half-dollar on relief, and it's going to be spent properly. And I'll not be back for supper, so you'll save on that, too. So long, Lacey Mahaffy, I'm off."

"If you never come back, it will be all the same," said Mrs. Halloran, not looking up.

"If I came back with a pocket full of money, you'd be glad to see me," said Mr. Halloran.

"It would want to be a great sum," said Mrs. Halloran.

Mr. Halloran shut the door behind him with a fine slam.

He strolled out into the clear fall weather, a late afternoon sun warming his neck and brightening the old red-brick, high-stooped houses of Perry Street. He would go after all these years to Billy's Place, he might find some luck there. He took his time, though, speaking to the neighbors as he went. "Good afternoon, Mr. Halloran." "Good afternoon to you, Mississ Caffery." . . . "It's fine weather for

the time of year, Mr. Gogarty." "It is indeed, Mr. Halloran." Mr. Halloran thrived on these civilities, he loved to flourish his hat and give a hearty good day like a man who has nothing on his mind. Ah, there was the young man from the G. and I. store around the corner. He knew what kind of job Mr. Halloran once held there. "Good day, Mr. Halloran." "Good day to you, Mr. McNerny, how's business holding up with you?" "Good for the times, Mr. Halloran, that's the best I can say." "Things are not getting any better, Mr. McNerny." "It's the truth we are all hanging on by the teeth now, Mr. Halloran."

Soothed by this acknowledgment of man's common misfortune Mr. Halloran greeted the young cop at the corner. The cop, with his quick eyesight, was snatching a read from a newspaper on the stand across the sidewalk. "How do you do, Young O'Fallon," asked Mr. Halloran, "is your business lively these days?"

"Quiet as the tomb itself on this block," said Young O'Fallon. "But that's a sad thing about Connolly, now." His eyes motioned toward the newspaper.

"Is he dead?" asked Mr. Halloran. "I haven't been out until now, I didn't see the papers."

"Ah, not yet," said Young O'Fallon, "but the G-men are after him, it looks they'll get him surely this time."

"Connolly in bad with the G-men? Holy Jesus," said Mr. Halloran, "who will they go after next? The meddlers."

"It's that numbers racket," said the cop. "What's the harm, I'd like to know? A man must get his money from somewhere when he's in politics. They oughta give him a chance."

"Connolly's a great fellow, God bless him, I hope he gives them the slip," said Mr. Halloran, "I hope he goes right

through their hands like a greased pig."

"He's smart," said the cop. "That Connolly's a smooth one. He'll come out of it."

Ah, will he though? Mr. Halloran asked himself. Who is safe if Connolly goes under? Wait till I give Lacey Mahaffy the news about Connolly, I'll like seeing her face the first time in twenty years. Lacey kept saying, "A man is a downright fool must be a crook to get rich. Plenty of the best people get rich and do no harm by it. Look at the Connollys now, good practical Catholics with nine children and more to come if God sends them, and Mass every day, and they're rolling in wealth richer than your McCorkerys with all their wickedness." So there you are, Lacey Mahaffy, wrong again, and welcome to your pious Connollys. Still and all it was Connolly who had given Gerald McCorkery his start in the world; McCorkery had been publicity man and then campaign manager for Connolly, in the days when Connolly had Tammany in the palm of his hand and the sky was the limit. And McCorkery had begun at the beginning, God knows. He was running a little basement place first, rent almost nothing, where the boys of the Connolly Club and the Little Tammany Association, just the mere fringe of the district, you might say, could drop in for quiet evenings for a game and a drink along with the talk. Nothing low, nothing but what was customary, with the house taking a cut on the winnings and a fine profit on the liquor, and holding the crowd together. Many was the big plan hatched there came out well for everybody. For everybody but myself, and why was that? And when McCorkery says to me, "You can take over now and run the place for the McCorkery Club," ah, there was my

chance and Lacey Mahaffy wouldn't hear of it, and with Maggie coming on just then it wouldn't do to excite her.

Mr. Halloran went on, following his feet that knew the way to Billy's Place, head down, not speaking to passers-by any more, but talking it out with himself again, again. What a track to go over seeing clearly one by one the crossroads where he might have taken a different turn that would have changed all his fortunes; but no, he had gone the other way and now it was too late. She wouldn't say a thing but "It's not right and you know it, Halloran," so what could a man do in all? Ah, you could have gone on with your rightful affairs like any other man, Halloran, it's not the woman's place to decide such things; she'd have come round once she saw the money, or a good whack on the backsides would have put her in her place. Never had mortal woman needed a good walloping worse than Lacey Mahaffy, but he could never find it in his heart to give it to her for her own good. That was just another of your many mistakes, Halloran. But there was always the life-long job with the G. and I. and peace in the house more or less. Many a man envied me in those days I remember, and I was resting easy on the savings and knowing with that and the pension I could finish out my life with some little business of my own. "What came of that?" Mr. Halloran inquired in a low voice, looking around him. Nobody answered. You know well what came of it, Halloran. You were fired out like a delivery boy, two years before your time was out. Why did you sit there watching the trick being played on others before you, knowing well it could happen to you and never quite believing what you saw with your own eyes? G. and I. gave me my start,

when I was green in this country, and they were my own kind or I thought so. Well, it's done now. Yes, it's done now, but there was all the years you could have cashed in on the numbers game with the best of them, helping collect the protection money and taking your cut. You could have had a fortune by now in Lacey's name, safe in the bank. It was good quiet profit and none the wiser. But they're wiser now, Halloran, don't forget; still it's a lump of grief and disappointment to swallow all the same. The game's up with Connolly, maybe; Lacey Mahaffy had said, "Numbers is just another way of stealing from the poor, and you weren't born to be a thief like that McCorkery." Ah, God no, Halloran, you were born to rot on relief and maybe that's honest enough for her. That Lacey— A fortune in her name would have been no good to me whatever. She's got all the savings tied up, such as they are, she'll pinch and she'll starve, she'll wash dirty clothes first, she won't give up a penny to live on. She has stood in my way, McCorkery, like a skeleton rattling its bones, and you were right about her, she has been my ruin. "Ah, it's not too late yet, Halloran," said McCorkery, appearing plain as day inside Mr. Halloran's head with the same old face and way with him. "Never say die, Halloran. Elections are coming on again, it's a busy time for all, there's work to be done and you're the very man I'm looking for. Why didn't you come to me sooner, you know I never forget an old friend. You don't deserve your ill fortune, Halloran," McCorkery told him; "I said so to others and I say it now to your face, never did man deserve more of the world than you, Halloran, but the truth is, there's not always enough good luck to go round; but it's your turn now, and I've got a job for

## *The Individual in a World Society*

you up to your abilities at last. For a man like you, there's nothing to it at all, you can toss it off with one hand tied, Halloran, and good money in it. Organization work, just among your own neighbors, where you're known and respected for a man of your word and an old friend of Gerald McCorkery. Now look, Halloran," said Gerald McCorkery, tipping him the wink, "do I need to say more? It's voters in large numbers we're after, Halloran, and you're to bring them in, alive or dead. Keep your eye on the situation at all times and get in touch with me when necessary. And name your figure in the way of money. And come up to the house sometimes, Halloran, why don't you? Rosie has asked me a hundred times, 'Whatever went with Halloran, the life of the party?' That's the way you stand with Rosie, Halloran. We're in a two-story flat now with green velvet curtains and carpets you can sink to your shoetops in, and there's no reason at all why you shouldn't have the same kind of place if you want it. With your gifts, you were never meant to be a poor man."

Ah, but Lacey Mahaffy wouldn't have it, maybe. "Then get yourself another sort of woman, Halloran, you're a good man still, find yourself a woman like Rosie to snuggle down with at night." Yes, but McCorkery, you forget that Lacey Mahaffy had legs and hair and eyes and a complexion fit for a chorus girl. But would she do anything with them? Never. Would you believe there was a woman wouldn't take off all her clothes at once even to bathe herself? What a hateful thing she was with her evil mind thinking everything was a sin, and never giving a man a chance to show himself a man in any way. But she's faded away now, her mean soul shows out all over her,

she's ugly as sin itself now, McCorkery. "It's what I told you would happen," said McCorkery, "but now with the job and the money you can go your ways and let Lacey Mahaffy go hers." I'll do it, McCorkery. "And forget about Connolly. Just remember I'm my own man and always was. Connolly's finished, but I'm not. Stronger than ever, Halloran, with Connolly out of the way. I saw this coming long ever ago, Halloran, I got clear of it. They don't catch McCorkery with his pants down, Halloran. And I almost forgot . . . Here's something for the running expenses to start. Take this for the present, and there's more to come. . . ."

Mr. Halloran stopped short, a familiar smell floated under his nose: the warm beer-and-beefsteak smell of Billy's Place, sawdust and onions, like any other bar maybe, but with something of its own besides. The talk within him stopped also as if a hand had been laid on his mind. He drew his fist out of his pocket almost expecting to find green money in it. The half-dollar was in his palm. "I'll stay while it lasts and hope McCorkery will come in."

The moment he stepped inside his eye lighted on McCorkery standing at the bar pouring his own drink from the bottle before him. Billy was mopping the bar before him idly, and his eye, swimming toward Halloran, looked like an oyster in its own juice. McCorkery saw him too. "Well, blow me down," he said, in a voice that had almost lost its old County Mayo ring, "if it ain't my old sidekick from the G. and I. Step right up, Halloran," he said, his poker face as good as ever, no man ever saw Gerald McCorkery surprised at anything. "Step up and name your choice."

Mr. Halloran glowed suddenly with the

## *A Day's Work*

warmth around the heart he always had at the sight of McCorkery, he couldn't put a name on it, but there was something about the man. Ah, it was Gerald all right, the same, who never forgot a friend and never seemed to care whether a man was rich or poor, with his face of granite and his eyes like blue agates in his head, a rock of a man surely. There he was, saying "Step right up," as if they had parted only yesterday; portly and solid in his expensive-looking clothes, as always; his hat a darker gray than his suit, with a devil-may-care roll to the brim, but nothing sporting, mind you. All first-rate, well made, and the right thing for him, more power to him. Mr. Halloran said, "Ah, McCorkery, you're the one man on this round earth I hoped to see today, but I says to myself, maybe he doesn't come round to Billy's Place so much nowadays."

"And why not?" asked McCorkery. "I've been coming around to Billy's Place for twenty-five years now, it's still headquarters for the old guard of the McCorkery Club, Halloran." He took in Mr. Halloran from head to foot in a flash of a glance and turned toward the bottle.

"I was going to have a beer," said Mr. Halloran, "but the smell of that whiskey changes my mind for me." McCorkery poured a second glass, they lifted the drinks with an identical crook of the elbow, a flick of the wrist at each other.

"Here's to crime," said McCorkery, and "Here's looking at you," said Mr. Halloran, merrily. Ah, to hell with it, he was back where he belonged, in good company. He put his foot on the rail and snapped down his whiskey, and no sooner was his glass on the bar than McCorkery was filling it again. "Just time for a few quick ones," he said, "before the boys get here." Mr. Halloran downed that one, too,

before he noticed that McCorkery hadn't filled his own glass. "I'm ahead of you," said McCorkery, "I'll skip this one."

There was a short pause, a silence fell around them that seemed to ooze like a fog from somewhere deep in McCorkery, it was suddenly as if he had not really been there at all, or hadn't uttered a word. Then he said outright: "Well, Halloran, let's have it. What's on your mind?" And he poured two more drinks. That was McCorkery all over, reading your thoughts and coming straight to the point.

Mr. Halloran closed his hand round his glass and peered into the little pool of whiskey. "Maybe we could sit down," he said, feeling weak-kneed all at once. McCorkery took the bottle and moved over to the nearest table. He sat facing the door, his look straying there now and then, but he had a set, listening face as if he was ready to hear anything.

"You know what I've had at home all these years," began Mr. Halloran, solemnly, and paused.

"Oh, God, yes," said McCorkery with simple good-fellowship. "How is herself these days?"

"Worse than ever," said Mr. Halloran, "but that's not it."

"What is it, then, Halloran?" asked McCorkery, pouring drinks. "You know well you can speak out your mind to me. Is it a loan?"

"No," said Mr. Halloran. "It's a job."

"Now that's a different matter," said McCorkery. "What kind of a job?"

Mr. Halloran, his head sunk between his shoulders, saw McCorkery wave a hand and nod at half a dozen men who came in and ranged themselves along the bar. "Some of the boys," said McCorkery. "Go on." His face was tougher, and quieter, as if the drink gave him a firm

## *The Individual in a World Society*

hold on himself. Mr. Halloran said what he had planned to say, had said already on the way down, and it still sounded reasonable and right to him. McCorkery waited until he had finished, and got up, putting a hand on Mr. Halloran's shoulder. "Stay where you are, and help yourself," he said, giving the bottle a little push, "and anything else you want, Halloran, order it on me. I'll be back in a few minutes, and you know I'll help you out if I can."

Halloran understood everything but it was through a soft warm fog, and he hardly noticed when McCorkery passed him again with the men, all in that creepy quiet way like footpads on a dark street. They went into the back room, the door opened on a bright light and closed again, and Mr. Halloran reached for the bottle to help himself wait until McCorkery should come again bringing the good word. He felt comfortable and easy as if he hadn't a bone or muscle in him, but his elbow slipped off the table once or twice and he upset his drink on his sleeve. Ah, McCorkery, is it the whole family you're taking on with the jobs? For my Maggie's husband is in now with the Little Tammany Association. "There's a bright lad will go far and I've got my eye on him, Halloran," said the friendly voice of McCorkery in his mind, and the brown face, softer than he remembered it, came up clearly behind his closed eyes.

"Ah, well, it's like myself beginning all over again in him," said Mr. Halloran, aloud, "besides my own job that I might have had all this time if I'd just come to see you sooner."

"True for you," said McCorkery in a merry County Mayo voice, inside Mr. Halloran's head, "and now let's drink to the gay future for old times' sake and be

damned to Lacey Mahaffy." Mr. Halloran reached for the bottle but it skipped sideways, rolled out of reach like a creature, and exploded at his feet. When he stood up the chair fell backward from under him. He leaned on the table and it folded up under his hands like cardboard.

"Wait now, take it easy," said McCorkery, and there he was, real enough, holding Mr. Halloran braced on the one side, motioning with his hand to the boys in the back room, who came out quietly and took hold of Mr. Halloran, some of them, on the other side. Their faces were all Irish, but not an Irishman Mr. Halloran knew in the lot, and he did not like any face he saw. "Let me be," he said with dignity, "I came here to see Gerald J. McCorkery, a friend of mine from old times, and let not a thug among you lay a finger upon me."

"Come on, Big Shot," said one of the younger men, in a voice like a file grating, "come on now, it's time to go."

"That's a fine low lot you've picked to run with, McCorkery," said Mr. Halloran, bracing his heels against the slow weight they put upon him toward the door, "I wouldn't trust one of them far as I could throw him by the tail."

"All right, all right, Halloran," said McCorkery. "Come on with me. Lay off him, Finnegan." He was leaning over Mr. Halloran and pressing something into his right hand. It was money, a neat little roll of it, good smooth thick money, no other feel like it in the world, you couldn't mistake it. Ah, he'd have an argument to show Lacey Mahaffy would knock her off her feet. Honest money with a job to back it up. "You'll stand by your given word, McCorkery, as ever?" he asked, peering into the rock-colored face above him, his

feet weaving a dance under him, his heart ready to break with gratitude.

"Ah, sure, sure," said McCorkery in a loud hearty voice with a kind of curse in it. "Crisakes, get on with him, do." Mr. Halloran found himself eased into a taxicab at the curb, with McCorkery speaking to the driver and giving him money. "So long, Big Shot," said one of the thug faces, and the taxicab door thumped to. Mr. Halloran bobbed about on the seat for a while, trying to think. He leaned forward and spoke to the driver. "Take me to my friend Gerald J. McCorkery's house," he said, "I've got important business. Don't pay any attention to what he said. Take me to his house."

"Yeah?" said the driver, without turning his head. "Well, here's where you get out, see? Right here." He reached back and opened the door. And sure enough, Mr. Halloran was standing on the sidewalk in front of the flat in Perry Street, alone except for the rows of garbage cans, the taxicab hooting its way around the corner, and a cop coming toward him, plainly to be seen under the street light.

"You should cast your vote for McCorkery, the poor man's friend," Mr. Halloran told the cop, "McCorkery's the man who will get us all off the spot. Stands by his old friends like a maniac. Got a wife named Rosie. Vote for McCorkery," said Mr. Halloran, working hard at his job, "and you'll be Chief of the Force when Halloran says the word."

"To hell with McCorkery, that stooge," said the cop, his mouth square and sour with the things he said and the things he saw and did every night on that beat. "There you are drunk again, Halloran, shame to you, with Lacey Mahaffy working her heart out over the washboard to buy your beer."

"It wasn't beer and she didn't buy it, mind you," said Mr. Halloran, "and what do you know about Lacey Mahaffy?"

"I knew her from old when I used to run errands for St. Veronica's Altar Society," said the cop, "and she was a great one, even then. Nothing good enough."

"It's the same today," said Mr. Halloran, almost sober for a moment.

"Well, go on up now and stay up till you're fit to be seen," said the cop, censoriously.

"You're Johnny Maginnis," said Mr. Halloran, "I know you well."

"You should know me by now," said the cop.

Mr. Halloran worked his way upstairs partly on his hands and knees, but once at his own door he stood up, gave a great blow on the panel with his fist, turned the knob and surged in like a wave after the door itself, holding out the money toward Mrs. Halloran, who had finished ironing and was at her mending.

She got up very slowly, her bony hand over her mouth, her eyes starting out at what she saw. "Ah, did you steal it?" she asked. "Did you kill somebody for that?" the words grated up from her throat in a dark whisper. Mr. Halloran glared back at her in fear.

"Suffering Saints, Lacey Mahaffy," he shouted until the whole houseful could hear him, "haven't ye any mind at all that you can't see your husband has had a turn of fortune and a job and times are changed from tonight? Stealing, is it? That's for your great friends the Connollys with their religion. Connolly steals, but Halloran is an honest man with a job in the McCorkery Club, and money in pocket."

"McCorkery, is it?" said Mrs. Halloran, loudly too. "Ah, so there's the whole fam-



## *The Individual in a World Society*

ily, young and old, wicked and innocent, taking their bread from McCorkery, at last. Well, it's no bread of mine, I'll earn my own as I have, you can keep your dirty money to yourself, Halloran, mind you I mean it."

"Great God, woman," moaned Mr. Halloran, and he tottered from the door to the table, to the ironing board, and stood there, ready to weep with rage, "haven't you a soul even that you won't come along with your husband when he's riding to riches and glory on the Tiger's back itself, with everything for the taking and no questions asked?"

"Yes, I have a soul," cried Mrs. Halloran, clenching her fists, her hair flying. "Surely I have a soul and I'll save it yet in spite of you. . . ."

She was standing there before him in a kind of faded gingham winding sheet, with her dead hands upraised, her dead eyes blind but fixed upon him, her voice coming up hollow from the deep tomb, her throat thick with grave damp. The ghost of Lacey Mahaffy was threatening him, it came nearer, growing taller as it came, the face changing to a demon's face with a fixed glassy grin. "It's all that drink on an empty stomach," said the ghost, in a hoarse growl. Mr. Halloran fetched a yellow horror right out of his very boots, and seized the flatiron from the board. "Ah, God damn you, Lacey Mahaffy, you devil, keep away, keep away," he howled, but she advanced on air, grinning and growling. He raised the flatiron and hurled it without aiming, and the specter, whoever it was, whatever it was, sank and was gone. He did not look, but broke out of the room and was back on the sidewalk before he knew he had meant to go there. Maginnis came up at once. "Hey there now, Halloran," he said, "I mean

business- this time. You get back upstairs or I'll run you in. Come along now, I'll help you get there this time, and that's the last of it. On relief the way you are, and drinking your head off."

Mr. Halloran suddenly felt calm, collected; he would take Maginnis up and show him just what had happened. "I'm not on relief any more, and if you want any trouble, just call on my friend, McCorkery. He'll tell you who I am."

"McCorkery can't tell me anything about you I don't know already," said Maginnis. "Stand up there now." For Halloran wanted to go up again on his hands and knees.

"Let a man be," said Mr. Halloran, trying to sit on the cop's feet. "I killed Lacey Mahaffy at last, you'll be pleased to hear," he said, looking up into the cop's face. "It was high time and past. But I did not steal the money."

"Well, ain't that just too bad," said the cop, hauling him up under the arms. "Chees, why'n't you make a good job while you had the chance? Stand up now. Ah, hell with it, stand up or I'll sock you one."

Mr. Halloran said, "Well, you don't believe it so wait and see."

At that moment they both glanced upward and saw Mrs. Halloran coming downstairs. She was holding to the rail, and even in the speckled hall-light they could see a great lumpy clout of flesh standing out on her forehead, all colors. She stopped, and seemed not at all surprised.

"So there you are, Officer Maginnis," she said. "Bring him up."

"That's a fine welt you've got over your eye this time, Mrs. Halloran," commented Officer Maginnis, politely.

"I fell and hit my head on the ironing

board," said Mrs. Halloran. "It comes of overwork and worry, day and night. A dead faint, Officer Maginnis. Watch your big feet there, you thriving, natural fool," she added to Mr. Halloran. "He's got a job now, you mightn't believe it, Officer Maginnis, but it's true. Bring him on up, and thank you."

She went ahead of them, opened the door, and led the way to the bedroom through the kitchen, turned back the covers, and Officer Maginnis dumped Mr. Halloran among the quilts and pillows. Mr. Halloran rolled over with a deep groan and shut his eyes.

"Many thanks to you, Officer Maginnis," said Mrs. Halloran.

"Don't mention it, Mrs. Halloran," said Officer Maginnis.

When the door was shut and locked, Mrs. Halloran went and dipped a large bath towel under the kitchen tap. She wrung it out and tied several good hard knots in one end and tried it out with a whack on the edge of the table. She walked in and stood over the bed and brought the knotted towel down in Mr. Halloran's face with all her might. He stirred and muttered, ill at ease. "That's for the flatiron, Halloran," she told him, in a cautious voice as if she were talking to herself, and whack, down came the towel again. "That's for the half-dollar," she said, and whack, "that's for your drunkenness—" Her arm swung around regularly, ending with a heavy thud on the face that was beginning to squirm, gasp, lift itself from the pillow and fall back again, in a puzzled kind of torment. "For your sock feet," Mrs. Halloran told him, whack, "and your laziness, and this is for missing Mass and"—here she swung half a dozen times—"that is for your daughter and your part in her. . . ."

She stood back breathless, the lump on her forehead burning in its furious colors. When Mr. Halloran attempted to rise, shielding his head with his arms, she gave him a push and he fell back again. "Stay there and don't give me a word," said Mrs. Halloran. He pulled the pillow over his face and subsided again, this time for good.

Mrs. Halloran moved about very deliberately. She tied the wet towel around her head, the knotted end hanging over her shoulder. Her hand ran into her apron pocket and came out again with the money. There was a five-dollar bill with three one-dollar bills rolled in it, and the half-dollar she had thought spent long since. "A poor start, but something," she said, and opened the cupboard door with a long key. Reaching in, she pulled a loosely fitted board out of the wall, and removed a black-painted metal box. She unlocked this, took out one five-cent piece from a welter of notes and coins. She then placed the new money in the box, locked it, put it away, replaced the board, shut the cupboard door and locked that. She went out to the telephone, dropped the nickel in the slot, asked for a number, and waited.

"Is that you, Maggie? Well, are things any better with you now? I'm glad to hear it. It's late to be calling, but there's news about your father. No, no, nothing of that kind, he's got a job. I said a *job*. Yes, at last, after all my urging him onward. . . . I've got him bedded down to sleep it off so he'll be ready for work tomorrow. . . . Yes, it's political work, toward the election time, with Gerald McCorkery. But that's no harm, getting votes and all, he'll be in the open air and it doesn't mean I'll have to associate with

*The Individual in a World Society*

low people, now or ever. It's clean enough work, with good pay; if it's not just what I prayed for, still it beats nothing, Maggie. After all my trying . . . it's like a miracle. You see what can be done with patience and doing your duty, Maggie. Now mind you do as well by your own husband."

## PART VI · HOW WRITING IS WRITTEN

**A**LL WRITING, as Thomas Mann has said, is autobiographical. It is the work of the whole man, the way he takes himself becoming what is called his style. The selections which follow will show how the writer takes himself and afford a number of clues to why he writes the way he does. Some of them will give aid toward better writing and some toward improvement in reading.

The writer in our time has been faced with a number of difficulties, both technical and personal. He has often felt alone, at cross currents with the flow of the times, yet in his desire to put down what he sees he has also reflected the world in which he finds himself. He has often had to invent new manners and methods to express the strange, new and intractable experiences of his world, but he has also felt the need to arrange and clarify those experiences for his readers.

The writer is here posed as the representative individual, whose values lie in honesty to his knowledge and fidelity to his beliefs. The emphasis is on a man's need to know himself and his world before he can act.

## HOW "BIGGER" WAS BORN

by RICHARD WRIGHT

I AM NOT so pretentious as to imagine that it is possible for me to account completely for my own book, "Native Son." But I am going to try to account for as much of it as I can, the sources of it, the material that went into it, and my own years' long changing attitude toward that material.

In a fundamental sense, an imaginative novel represents the merging of two extremes; it is an intensely intimate expression on the part of a consciousness couched in terms of the most objective and commonly known events. It is at once something private and public by its very nature and texture. Confounding the author who is trying to lay his cards on the table is the dogging knowledge that his imagination is a kind of community medium of exchange, through what he has read, felt, thought, seen, and remembered is translated into extensions as impersonal as a worn dollar bill.

So, at the outset, I say frankly that there are phases of "Native Son" which I shall make no attempt to account for. There are meanings in my book of which I was not aware until they literally spilled out upon the paper. I shall sketch the outline of how I *consciously* came into possession of the materials that went into "Native Son," but there will be many things I shall omit, not because I want to, but because I don't know them.

The birth of Bigger Thomas goes back to my childhood, and there was not just one Bigger, but many of them, more than I could count and more than you suspect.

But let me start with the first Bigger, whom I shall call Bigger No. 1.

When I was a bareheaded, barefoot kid in Jackson, Mississippi, there was a boy who terrorized me and all of the boys I played with. If we were playing games, he would saunter up and snatch from us our balls, bats, spinning tops, and marbles. We would stand around pouting, sniffing, trying to keep back our tears, begging for our playthings. But Bigger would refuse. We never demanded that he give them back; we were afraid and Bigger was bad. We had seen him clout boys when he was angry and we did not want to run that risk. We never recovered our toys unless we flattered him and made him feel that he was superior to us. Then, perhaps, if he felt like it, he condescended, threw them at us and then gave each of us a swift kick in the bargain, just to make us feel his utter contempt.

If I had known only one Bigger I would not have written "Native Son." Let me call the next one Bigger No. 2; he was about seventeen and tougher than the first Bigger. Since I, too, had grown older, I was a little less afraid of him. And the hardness of this Bigger No. 2 was not directed toward me or the other Negroes, but toward the whites who ruled the South. He bought clothes and food on credit and would not pay for them. He lived in the dingy shacks of the white landlords and refused to pay rent. Of course, he had no money, but neither did we. We did without the necessities of life

*How "Bigger" Was Born*, by Richard Wright. Harper & Brothers. Copyright, 1940, by Richard Wright. Condensation as it appeared in *The Saturday Review of Literature*, June 1, 1940.

## *How "Bigger" Was Born*

and starved ourselves, but he never would. When we asked him why he did such, he would tell us (as though we were little children in a kindergarten) that the white folks had everything and he had nothing.

There was Bigger No. 3, whom white folks called a "bad nigger." He carried his life in his hands in a literal fashion. I once worked as a ticket-taker in a Negro movie house (all movie houses in Dixie are Jim Crow; there are movies for whites and movies for blacks), and many times Bigger No. 3 came to the door and gave my arm a hard pinch and walked into the theater. Resentfully and silently, I'd nurse my bruised arm. Presently, the proprietor would come over and ask how were things going. I'd point into the darkened theater and say: "Bigger's in, there." "Did he pay?" the proprietor would ask. "No, sir," I'd answer. The proprietor would pull down the corners of his lips and speak through his teeth: "We'll kill that Goddamn nigger one of these days." And the episode would end right there. But later on Bigger No. 3 was killed during the days of Prohibition; while delivering liquor to a customer he was shot through the back by a white cop.

And then there was Bigger No. 4 whose only law was death. The Jim Crow laws of the South were not for him. But as he laughed and cursed and broke them, he knew that someday he'd have to pay for his freedom. His rebellious spirit made him violate all the taboos and consequently he always oscillated between moods of intense elation and depression. He was never happier than when he had outwitted some foolish custom, and he was never more melancholy than when brooding over the impossibility of his ever being free. He had no job, for he regarded

digging ditches for fifty cents a day as slavery. "I can't live on that," he would say. Oftentimes I'd find him reading a book; he would stop and in a joking, wistful, and cynical manner ape the antics of the white folks. Generally, he'd end his mimic in a depressed state and say: "The white folks won't let us do nothing." Bigger No. 4 was sent to the asylum for the insane.

Then there was Bigger No. 5 who rode the Jim Crow street cars without paying and sat wherever he pleased. I remember one morning his getting into a street car (all street cars in Dixie are divided into two sections: one section is for whites and is labeled—FOR WHITES; the other section is for Negroes and is labeled—FOR COLORED) and sitting in the white section. The conductor went to him and said: "Come on, nigger. Move over where you belong. Can't you read?" Bigger answered: "Naw; I can't read." The conductor flared up: "Get out of that seat!" Bigger took out his knife, opened it, held it nonchalantly in his hand, and replied: "Make me." The conductor turned red, blinked, clenched his fists, and walked away, stammering: "The Goddamn scum of the earth!" A small angry conference of white men took place in the front of the car and the Negroes sitting in the Jim Crow section overheard: "That's that Bigger Thomas nigger and you'd better leave 'im alone." The Negroes experienced an intense flash of pride and the street car moved on its journey without incident. I don't know what happened to Bigger No. 5. But I can guess.

Why did Bigger revolt? No explanation based upon a hard and fast rule of conduct can be given. But there were always two factors psychologically dominant in his personality. First, through some

## *How Writing Is Written*

quirk of circumstance, he had become estranged from the religion and the folk culture of his race. Second, he was trying to react to and answer the call of the dominant civilization whose glitter came to him through the newspapers, magazines, radios, movies, and the mere imposing sight and sound of daily American life. In many respects his emergence as a distinct type was inevitable.

As I grew older, I became familiar with the Bigger Thomas conditioning and its numerous shadings no matter where I saw it in Negro life. It was not as blatant or extreme as in the originals; but it was there, nevertheless, like an undeveloped negative.

Sometimes, in areas far removed from Mississippi, I'd hear a Negro say: "I wish I didn't have to live this way. I feel like I want to burst." Then the answer would pass; he would go back to his job and try to eke out a few pennies to support his family.

Sometimes I'd hear a Negro ex-soldier say: "What in hell did I fight in the war for? They segregated me even when I was offering my life for my country." But he, too, like the others, would soon forget, would become caught up in the tense grind of struggling for bread.

I've even heard Negroes, in moments of anger and bitterness, praise what Japan is doing in China, not because they believed in oppression (being objects of oppression themselves), but because they would suddenly sense how empty their lives were when looking at the dark faces of Japanese generals in the rotogravure supplements of the Sunday newspaper. They would dream of what it would be like to live in a country where they could forget their color and play a responsible

role in the vital processes of the nation's life.

I've even heard Negroes say that maybe Hitler and Mussolini are all right; that maybe Stalin is all right; they did not say this out of any intellectual comprehension of the forces at work in the world, but because they felt that these men "did things," a phrase which is charged with more meaning than the mere words imply. There was in the back of their minds, when they said this, a wild and intense longing (wild and intense because it was suppressed!) to belong, to be identified, to feel that they were alive as other people were, to be caught up forgetfully and exultingly in the swing of events, to feel the clean deep organic satisfaction of doing a job in common with others.

It was not until I went to live in Chicago that I first thought seriously of writing of Bigger Thomas. Two items of my experience combined to make me aware of Bigger as a meaningful and prophetic symbol. First, being free of the daily pressure of the Dixie environment, I was able to come into possession of my own feelings. Second, my contact with the labor movement and its ideology made me see Bigger clearly and feel what he meant.

I made the discovery that Bigger Thomas was not black all the time; he was white, too, and there were literally millions of him, everywhere. The extension of my sense of the personality of Bigger was the pivot of my life; it altered the complexion of my existence. I became conscious, at first dimly and then later on with increasing clarity and conviction, of a vast, muddled pool of human life in America. It was as though I had put on a pair of spectacles whose power was that of an x-ray enabling me to see

## How "Bigger" Was Born

deeper into the lives of men. Whenever I picked up a newspaper, I'd no longer feel that I was reading of the doings of whites alone (Negroes are rarely mentioned in the press unless they've committed some crime!), but of a complex struggle for life going on in my country, a struggle in which I was involved. I sensed, too, that the Southern scheme of oppression was but an appendage of a far vaster and in many respects more ruthless and impersonal commodity-profit machine.

Trade union struggles and issues began to grow meaningful to me. The flow of goods across the seas, buoying and depressing the wages of men, held a fascination. The pronouncements of foreign governments, their policies, plans, and acts were calculated and weighed in relation to the lives of people about me. I was literally overwhelmed when, in reading the works of Russian revolutionists, I came across descriptions of the "holiday energies of the masses," "the locomotives of history," "the conditions prerequisite for revolution," and so forth. I approached all of these new revelations in the light of Bigger Thomas, his hopes, fears, and despairs; and I began to feel far-flung kinships and sense, with fright and abashment, the possibilities for *alliances* between the American Negro and other people possessing a kindred consciousness.

As my mind extended in this general and abstract manner, it was fed with even more vivid and concrete examples of the lives of Bigger Thomas. The urban environment of Chicago, affording a more stimulating life, made the Negro Bigger Thomases react more violently than even in the South. More than ever I began to see and understand the environmental factors which made for this extreme con-

duct. It was not that Chicago segregated Negroes more than the South, but that Chicago had more to offer, that Chicago's physical aspect—noisy, crowded, filled with the sense of power and fulfillment—did so much more to dazzle the mind with a taunting sense of possible achievement that the segregation it did impose brought forth from Bigger a reaction more obstreperous than in the South.

This then, was the fabulous city in which Bigger lived, an indescribable city, huge, roaring, dirty, noisy, raw, stark, brutal; a city of extremes: torrid summers and sub-zero winters, white people and black people, the English language and strange tongues, foreign born and native born, scabby poverty and gaudy luxury, high idealism and hard cynicism! A city so young that, in thinking of its short history, one's mind, as it travels backward in time, is stopped abruptly by the barren stretches of wind-swept prairie! But a city old enough to have caught within the homes of its long, straight streets the symbols and images of man's age-old destiny, of truth as old as the mountains and seas, of dramas as abiding as the soul of man itself! A city which has become the pivot of the Eastern, Western, Northern, and Southern poles of the nation.

So the concrete picture and the abstract linkages of relationships fed each other, each making the other more meaningful and affording my emotions an opportunity to react to them with success and understanding. The process was like a swinging pendulum, each to and fro motion throwing up its tiny bit of meaning and significance, each stroke helping to develop the dim negative which had been implanted in my mind in the South.



## *How Writing Is Written*

More than anything else, as a writer, I was fascinated by the similarity of the emotional tensions of Bigger in America and Bigger in Nazi Germany and Bigger in old Russia. All Bigger Thomases, white and black, felt tense, afraid, nervous, hysterical, and restless. From far away Nazi Germany and old Russia had come to me items of knowledge that told me that certain modern experiences were creating types of personalities whose existence ignored racial and national lines of demarcation, that these personalities carried with them a more universal drama-element than anything I'd ever encountered before; that these personalities were mainly consequent upon men and women living in a world whose fundamental assumptions could no longer be taken for granted; a world ridden with national and class strife; a world whose metaphysical meanings had vanished; a world in which God no longer existed as a daily focal point of men's lives; a world in which men could no longer retain their faith in an ultimate hereafter. It was a highly geared world whose nature was conflict and action, a world whose limited area and vision imperiously urged men to satisfy their organisms, a world that existed on a plane of animal sensation alone.

It was a world in which millions of men lived and behaved like drunkards, taking a stiff drink of hard life to lift them up for a thrilling moment, to give them a quivering sense of wild exultation and fulfillment that soon faded and let them down. Eagerly they took another drink, wanting to avoid the dull, flat look of things, then still another, this time stronger, and then they felt that their lives had meaning. Speaking figuratively, they were soon chronic alcoholics, men

who lived by violence, through extreme action and sensation, through drowning daily in a perpetual nervous agitation.

From these items I drew my first political conclusions about Bigger: I felt that Bigger, an American product, a native son of this land, carried within him the potentialities of either communism or fascism. I don't mean to say that the Negro boy I depicted in "Native Son" is either a Communist or a Fascist. He is neither. But he is a product of a dislocated society; he is a dispossessed and disinherited man; he is all of this and he lives amid the greatest possible plenty on earth and he is looking and feeling for a way out. Whether he'll follow some gaudy, hysterical leader who'll promise rashly to fill the void in him, or whether he'll come to an understanding with the millions of his kindred fellow workers under trade union or revolutionary guidance depends upon the future drift of events in America. But, granting the emotional state, the tensility, the fear, the hate, the impatience, the sense of exclusion, the ache for violent action, the emotional and cultural hunger, Bigger's conditioned organism will not become an ardent, or even a lukewarm, supporter of the status quo.

For a long time I toyed with the idea of writing a novel in which a Negro Bigger Thomas would loom as a symbolic figure of American life, a figure who would hold within him the prophecy of our future. I felt strongly that he held within him, in a measure which perhaps no other contemporary type did, the outlines of action and feeling which we would encounter on a vast scale in the days to come. Just as one sees when one walks into a medical research laboratory jars of alcohol containing abnormally large or

## *How "Bigger" Was Born*

distorted portions of the human body, just so did I see and feel that the conditions of life under which Negroes are forced to live in America contain the embryonic emotional prefigurations of how a large part of the body politic would react under stress.

So, with this much knowledge of myself and the world gained and known, why should I not try to work out the problem of what will happen to Bigger upon paper? Why should I not, like a scientist in a laboratory, use my imagination and invent test-tube situations, place Bigger in them, and, following the guidance of my own hopes and fears, what I had learned and remembered, work out in fictional form an emotional statement and resolution of this problem?

But several things militated against my starting to work. Like Bigger himself, I felt a mental censor, product of the fears which a Negro feels from living in America, standing over me, draped in white, warning me not to write. This censor's warnings were translated into my own thought processes thus: "What will white people think if I drew the picture of such a Negro boy? Will they not at once say: 'See, didn't we tell you all along that niggers were like that? Now, look, one of their own kind has come along and drawn the picture for us!'"

Another thought kept me from writing. What would my own white and black comrades in the Communist Party say? This thought was the most bewildering of all. Politics is a hard and narrow game; its policies represent the aggregate desires and aspirations of millions of people. Its goals are rigid and simply drawn and the minds of the majority of politicians are set, congealed in terms of daily, tactical

maneuvers. How could I create such complex and wide schemes of associational thought and feeling, such filigreed webs of dreams and politics without being mistaken for a "smuggler of reaction," "an ideological confusionist," or "an individualistic and dangerous element"? Though my heart is with the collectivist and proletarian ideal, I solved this problem by assuring myself that honest politics and honest feeling in imaginative representation ought to be able to meet on common healthy ground without fear, suspicion, and quarreling. Further, and more importantly, I steeled myself by coming to the conclusion that whether politicians accepted or rejected Bigger did not really matter; my task as I felt it was to free myself of this burden of impressions and feelings, recast them into the image of Bigger and make him *true*.

And there was another constricting thought that kept me from work. It deals with my own race. I asked myself: "What will Negro doctors, lawyers, dentists, bankers, school teachers, social workers and business men think of me if I drew such a picture of Bigger?" I knew from long and painful experience that the Negro middle and professional classes were the people of my own race who were more than anyone else ashamed of Bigger and what he meant. Having narrowly escaped the Bigger Thomas reaction pattern themselves,—indeed, still retaining traces of it within the confines of their own timid personalities—they would not relish being publicly reminded of the lowly, shameful depths of life above which they enjoyed their bourgeois lives. Never did they want people, especially *white* people, to think that their lives were so much touched by anything so dark and brutal as Bigger.

But Bigger won over all these claims;

## *How Writing Is Written*

he won because I felt that I was hunting on the trail of more exciting and thrilling game. What Bigger meant had claimed me because I felt with all of my being that he was more important than what any white person would say or try to make of him, more important than any political analysis designed to explain or deny him, more important, even, than my own sense of fear, shame, and diffidence.

The second event that spurred me to write of Bigger was more personal and subtle. I had written a book of short stories which was published under the title of "Uncle Tom's Children." When the reviews of that book began to appear, I realized that I had made an awfully naive mistake. I found that I had written a book which even bankers' daughters could read and weep over and feel good. I swore to myself that if I ever wrote another book, no one would weep over it; that it would be so hard and deep that they would have to face it without the consolation of tears. It was this that made me get to work in dead earnest.

Now, for the writing. During the years in which I had met all of those Bigger Thomases, those varieties of Bigger Thomases, I had not consciously gathered material to write of them; I had not kept a notebook record of their sayings and doings. Their actions had simply made impressions upon my sensibilities as I lived from day to day, impressions which crystallized and coagulated into clusters and configurations of memory, attitudes, moods, ideas. And these subjective states, in turn, were automatically stored away somewhere in me. I was not even aware of the process. But, excited over the book which I had set for myself to do, under the stress of emotion, these things came surging up, tangled, fused, knotted, enter-

taining me by the sheer variety and potency of their meaning and suggestiveness. . . .

With the whole theme in mind, in an attitude akin to prayer, I gave myself up to the story. In an effort to capture some phase of Bigger's life that would not come to me readily, I'd jot down as much of it as I could. Then I'd read it over and over, adding each time a word, a phrase, a sentence until I felt that I had caught all the shadings of reality I felt dimly were there. With each of these rereadings and rewritings it seemed that I'd gather in facts and facets that tried to run away.

The first draft of the novel was written in four months, straight through, and ran to some 576 pages. Just as a man rises in the mornings to dig ditches for his bread, so I'd work daily. I'd think of some abstract principle of Bigger's conduct and at once my mind would turn it into some act I'd seen Bigger perform, some act which I hoped would be familiar enough to the American reader to gain his credence. But in the writing of scene after scene I was guided by but one criterion: to tell the truth as I saw it and felt it. That is, to objectify in words some insight derived from my living in the form of action, scene, and dialogue. If a scene seemed improbable to me, I'd not tear it up, but ask myself: "Does it reveal enough of what I feel to stand in spite of its unreality?" If I felt it did, it stood. If I felt that it did not, I ripped it out.

With the first draft down, I found that I could not end the book satisfactorily. In the first draft, I had Bigger going smack to the electric chair; but I felt that two murders were enough for one novel. I cut the final scene and went back to worry about the beginning. I had no luck. The book was one-half finished, with the

## How "Bigger" Was Born

opening and closing scenes unwritten. Then, one night, in desperation—I hope that I'm not disclosing the hidden secrets of my craft!—I sneaked out and got a bottle. With the help of it, I began to remember many things which I could not remember before. One of them was that Chicago was over-run with rats. I recalled that I'd seen many rats on the streets, that I'd heard and read of Negro children being bitten by rats in their beds. At first I rejected the idea of Bigger battling a rat in his room; I was afraid that the rat would "hog" the scene. But the rat would not leave me; he presented himself in many attractive guises. So, cautioning myself to allow the rat scene to disclose *only* Bigger, his family, their little room, and their relationships, I let the rat walk in and he behaved.

Many of the scenes were torn out as I reworked the book. The mere rereading of what I'd written made me think of the possibility of developing themes but hinted at in the first draft. For example, the entire guilt theme that runs through "Native Son" was woven in *after* the first draft was written.

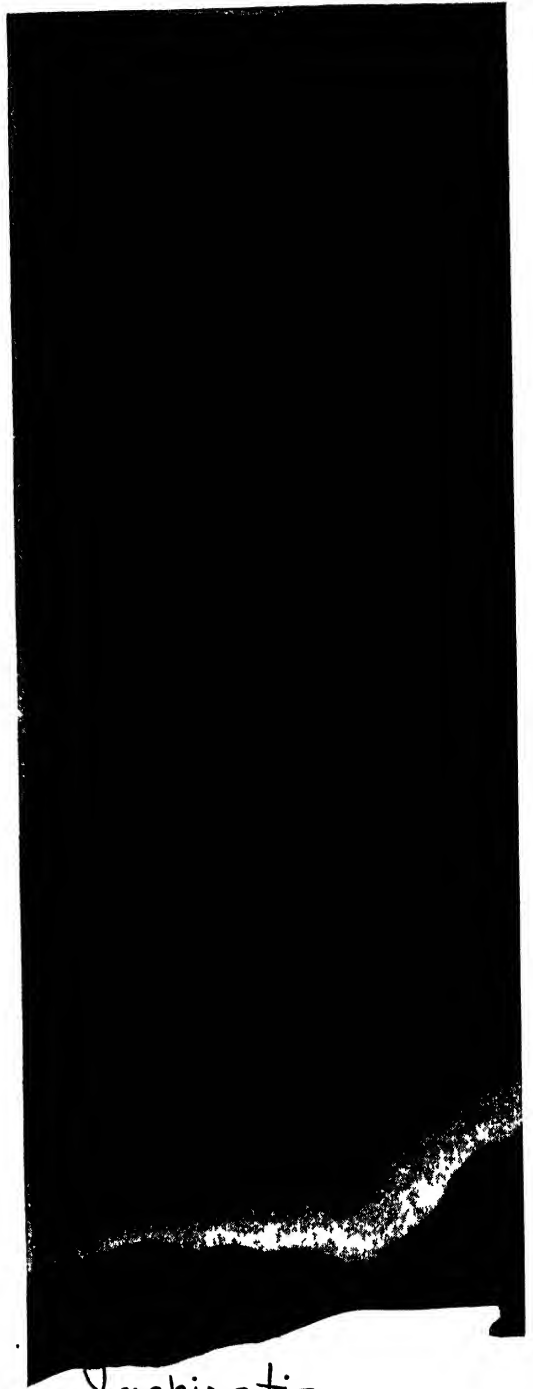
At last I found out how to end the book; I ended it just as I had begun it, showing Bigger living dangerously, taking his life into his hands, accepting what life had made him. The lawyer, Max, was placed in Bigger's cell at the end of the novel to register the moral—or what I felt was the moral—horror of Negro life in the United States.

The writing of "Native Son" was an exciting, enthralling, and even a romantic experience. With what I've learned in the writing of this book, with all of its blemishes, imperfections, with all of its unrealized potentialities, I am launching out upon another novel, this time about the

status of women in modern American society. This book, too, goes back to my childhood, just as Bigger went, for, while I was storing away impressions for Bigger, I was storing away impressions of many other things that made me think and wonder. Some experience will ignite somewhere deep down in me the smoldering embers of new fires and I'll be off again to write yet another novel.

I don't know if "Native Son" is a good book or a bad book. And I don't know if the book I'm working on now will be a good book or a bad book. And I really don't care. The mere writing of it will be more fun and a deeper satisfaction than any praise or blame from anybody.

I feel that I'm lucky to be alive to write novels today, when the whole world is caught in the pangs of war and change. Early American writers, Henry James and Nathaniel Hawthorne, complained bitterly about the bleakness and flatness of the American scene. But I think that if they were alive, they'd feel at home in modern America. True, we have no great church in America; our national traditions are still of a sort that we are not wont to brag of them; and we have no army that's above the level of mercenary fighters; we have no group acceptable to the whole of our country upholding certain humane values; we have no rich symbols, no colorful rituals. . . . We have only a money grubbing, industrial civilization. But we do have in the Negro the embodiment of a past tragic enough to appease the spiritual hunger of even a James; and we have in the oppression of the Negro a shadow athwart our national life dense and heavy enough to satisfy even the gloomy broodings of a Hawthorne. And if Poe were alive he would not have to invent horror; horror would invent him.



Inspiration\_\_\_\_\_



*From It's a long way to Heaven, copyright, 1945, by Abner Dean, and reproduced by permission of Rinehart & Company, Inc., Publishers.*

from CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE, CANTO III, STANZA VI

by GEORGE GORDON BYRON

'T is to create, and in creating live  
A being more intense that we endow  
With form our fancy, gaining as we give  
The life we image, even as I do now.  
What am I? Nothing: but not so art thou,  
Soul of my thought! with whom I traverse earth,  
Invisible but gazing, as I glow  
Mix'd with thy spirit, blended with thy birth,  
And feeling still with thee in my crush'd feelings' dearth.

REPORTS

by S. I. HAYAKAWA

*Vague and insignificant forms of speech, and abuse of language, have so long passed for mysteries of science; and hard or misapplied words with little or no meaning have, by prescription, such a right to be mistaken for deep learning and height of speculation, that it will not be easy to persuade either those who speak or those who hear them, that they are but the covers of ignorance and hindrance of true knowledge.*

JOHN LOCKE

FOR THE PURPOSES of the interchange of information, the basic symbolic act is the report of what we have seen, heard, or felt: "There is a ditch on each side of the road." "You can get those at Smith's hardware store for \$2.75." "There aren't any fish on that side of the lake, but there are on this side." Then there are reports of reports: "The longest waterfall in the world is Victoria Falls in Rhodesia." "The Battle of Hastings took place in 1066." "The papers say that there was a big

smash-up on Highway 41 near Evansville." Reports adhere to the following rules: first, they are capable of verification; secondly, they exclude, so far as possible, judgments, inferences, and the use of "loaded" words.

*Verifiability*

Reports are verifiable. We may not always be able to verify them ourselves, since we cannot track down the evidence for every piece of history we know, nor can we all go to Evansville to see the remains of the smash-up before they are cleared away. But if we are roughly agreed on the names of things, on what constitutes a "foot," "yard," "bushel," and so on, and on how to measure time, there is relatively little danger of our misunderstanding each other. Even in a world such as we have today, in which everybody seems to be fighting everybody else, *we still to a surprising degree trust each*

From *Language in Action* by S. I. Hayakawa, copyright, 1941, by Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc.

*other's reports.* We ask directions of total strangers when we are traveling. We follow directions on road signs without being suspicious of the people who put the signs up. We read books of information about science, mathematics, automotive engineering, travel, geography, the history of costume, and other such factual matters, and we usually assume that the author is doing his best to tell us as truly as he can what he knows. And we are safe in so assuming most of the time. With the emphasis that is being given today to the discussion of biased newspapers, propagandists, and the general untrustworthiness of many of the communications we receive, we are likely to forget that we still have an enormous amount of reliable information available and that deliberate misinformation, except in warfare, still is more the exception than the rule. The desire for self-preservation that compelled men to evolve means for the exchange of information also compels them to regard the giving of false information as profoundly reprehensible.

At its highest development, the language of reports is known as science. By "highest development" we mean greatest general usefulness. Presbyterian and Catholic, workingman and capitalist, German and Englishman, *agree* on the meanings of such symbols as  $2 \times 2 = 4$ ,  $100^{\circ} \text{C.}$ ,  $\text{HNO}_3$ , 8:35 A.M., 1940 A.D., 5000 r.p.m., 1000 kilowatts, *pulex irritans*, and so on. But how, it may be asked, can there be agreement even about this much among people who are at each other's throats about practically everything else? The answer is that circumstances *compel them to agree*, whether they wish to or not. If, for example, there were a dozen different religious sects in the United States, each

insisting on its own way of naming the time of the day and the days of the year, the mere necessity of having a dozen different calendars, a dozen different kinds of watches, and a dozen sets of schedules for business hours, trains, and radio programs, to say nothing of the effort that would be required for translating terms from one nomenclature to another, would make life as we know it impossible.

The language of reports, then, including the more accurate reports of science, is "map" language, and because it gives us reasonably accurate representations of the "territory" it enables us to get work done. Such language may often be what is commonly termed "dull" or "uninteresting" reading; one does not usually read logarithmic tables or telephone directories for entertainment. But we could not get along without it. There are numberless occasions in the talking and writing we do in everyday life that require that we state things *in such a way that everybody will agree with our formulation.*

#### *Some Writing Exercises: The Exclusion of Judgments*

The reader will find that practice in writing reports is a quick means of increasing his linguistic awareness. It is an excellent exercise, one which will constantly provide him with his own examples of the principles of language and interpretation under discussion. The reports should be about first-hand experience—scenes the reader has witnessed himself, meetings and social events he has taken part in, people he knows well. They should be of such a nature that they can be *verified* and *agreed upon*.

This is not a simple task. A report must



## How Writing Is Written

exclude all expressions of the writer's approval or disapproval of the occurrences, persons, or objects he is describing. For example, a report cannot say, "It was a wonderful car," but must say something like this: "It has been driven 50,000 miles and has never required any repairs." Again, statements like "Jack lied to us" must be suppressed in favor of the more verifiable statement, "Jack told us he didn't have the keys to his car with him. However, when he pulled a handkerchief out of his pocket a few minutes later, the keys fell out." Also, a report may not say, "The senator was stubborn, defiant, and unco-operative," or "The senator courageously stood by his principles"; it must say instead, "The senator's vote was the only one against the bill." Most people regard statements like the following as statements of fact: "He is a *thief*." "He is a *bad boy*." These again must be excluded in favor of statements of the more verifiable kind: "He was convicted of theft and served two years at Waupun." "His mother, his father, and most of the neighbors say he is a bad boy." After all, to say of a man that he is a "thief" is to say in effect, "He has stolen *and will steal again*"—which is more a prediction than a report. Even to say, "He has stolen," is to pass a judgment on an act about which there may be difference of opinion among different observers. But to say that he was "convicted of theft" is to make a statement capable of being agreed upon through verification in court and prison records.

Scientific verifiability rests upon the external observation of facts, not upon the heaping up of judgments. If one person says, "Peter is a deadbeat," and another says, "I think so too," the statement has not been verified. In court cases, consider-

able trouble is sometimes caused by witnesses who cannot distinguish their judgments from the facts upon which those judgments are based. Cross-examinations under these circumstances go something like this:

*Witness.* That dirty double-crosser Jacobs ratted on me!

*Defense Attorney.* Your honor, I object.

*Judge.* Objection sustained. [Witness's remark is stricken from the record.] Now, try to tell the court exactly what happened.

*Witness.* He *double-crossed* me, the dirty, lying rat!

*Defense Attorney.* Your honor, I object!

*Judge.* Objection sustained. [Witness's remark is again stricken from the record.] Will the witness try to stick to the facts.

*Witness.* But I'm telling you the facts, your honor. He did *double-cross* me.

This can continue indefinitely unless the cross-examiner exercises some ingenuity in order to get at the facts behind the judgment. To the witness it is a "fact" that he was "double-crossed." Often hours of patient questioning are required before the factual bases of the judgment are revealed.

### The Exclusion of Inferences

Another requirement of reports is that they must make no guesses as to what is going on in other people's minds. When we say, "He was angry," we are not reporting, we are making an *inference* from such observable facts as the following: "He pounded his fist on the table; he swore; he threw the telephone directory at his stenographer." In this particular example, the inference appears to be fairly safe; nevertheless, it is important to remember, especially for the purposes of training oneself, that it is an inference.

Such expressions as "He thought a lot of himself," "He was scared of girls," "She always wants nothing but the best," should be avoided in favor of the more verifiable "He showed evidences of annoyance when people did not treat him politely," "He stammered when he asked girls to dance with him," "She frequently declared that she wanted nothing but the best."

### *The Exclusion of "Loaded" Words*

In short, the process of reporting is the process of keeping one's personal feelings out. In order to do this, one must be constantly on guard against "loaded" words that reveal or arouse feelings. Instead of "sneaked in," one should say "entered quietly"; instead of "politicians," "congressmen" or "aldermen"; instead of "officeholder," "public official"; instead of "tramp," "homeless unemployed"; instead of "Chinaman," "Chinese"; instead of "dictatorial set-up," "centralized authority"; instead of "crackpots," "holders of uncommon views." A newspaper reporter, for example, is not permitted to write, "A bunch of fools who are suckers enough to fall for Senator Smith's ideas met last evening in that rickety firetrap that disfigures the south edge of town." Instead he says, "Between seventy-five and a hundred people were present last evening to hear an address by Senator Smith at the Evergreen Gardens near the South Side city limits."

### *Second Stage of the Writing Exercises: Slanting*

In the course of writing reports of personal experiences, it will be found that in spite of all endeavors to keep judgments out, some will creep in. An account of a man, for example, may go like this: "He had apparently not shaved for several days,

and his face and hands were covered with grime. His shoes were torn, and his coat, which was several sizes too small for him, was spotted with dried clay." Now, in spite of the fact that no judgment has been stated, a very obvious one is implied. Let us contrast this with another description of the same man. "Although his face was bearded and neglected, his eyes were clear, and he looked straight ahead as he walked rapidly down the road. He looked very tall; perhaps the fact that his coat was too small for him emphasized that impression. He was carrying a book under his left arm, and a small terrier ran at his heels." In this example, the impression about the same man is considerably changed, simply by the inclusion of new details and the subordination of unfavorable ones. *Even if explicit judgments are kept out of one's writing, implied judgments will get in.*

How, then, can we ever give an impartial report? The answer is, of course, that we cannot attain complete impartiality while we use the language of everyday life. Even with the very impersonal language of science, the task is sometimes difficult. Nevertheless, we can, by being aware of the favorable or unfavorable feelings that certain words and facts can arouse, attain enough impartiality for practical purposes. Such awareness enables us *to balance the implied favorable and unfavorable judgments against each other.* To learn to do this, it is a good idea to write *two* essays at a time on the same subject, both strict reports, to be read side by side: the first to contain facts and details likely to prejudice the reader in favor of the subject, the second to contain those likely to prejudice the reader against it. For example:

## How Writing Is Written

### FOR

He had white teeth.

His eyes were blue, his hair blond and abundant.

He had on a clean blue shirt.

He often helped his wife with the dishes.

His pastor spoke very highly of him.

### AGAINST

His teeth were uneven.

He rarely looked people straight in the eye.

His shirt was frayed at the cuffs.

He rarely got through drying dishes without breaking a few.

His grocer said he was always slow about paying his bills.

of all help to prevent one from slipping unconsciously from observable facts to judgments; that is, from "He was a member of the Ku Klux Klan" to "the dirty scoundrell!" Next, it will reveal how little we really want to be impartial anyway, especially about our best friends, our parents, our alma mater, our own children, our country, the company we work for, the product we sell, our competitor's product, or anything else in which our interests are deeply involved. Finally, we will discover that, even if we have no wish to be impartial, we write more clearly, more forcefully, and more convincingly by this process of sticking as close as possible to observable facts. There will be less "hot air" and more substance.

### *Slanting Both Ways at Once*

This process of selecting details favorable or unfavorable to the subject being described may be termed *slanting*. Slanting gives no explicit judgments, but it differs from reporting in that it deliberately makes certain judgments inescapable. The writer striving for impartiality will, therefore, take care to slant *both for and against* his subject, trying as conscientiously as he can to keep the balance even. The next stage of the exercise, then, should be to rewrite the parallel essays into single coherent essays in which details on both sides are included.

His teeth were white, but uneven; his eyes were blue, his hair blond and abundant. He did not often look people straight in the eye. His shirt was slightly frayed at the cuffs, but it was clean. He frequently helped his wife with the dishes, but he broke many of them. Opinion about him in the community was divided. His grocer said he was slow about paying his bills, but his pastor spoke very highly of him.

This example is, of course, oversimplified and admittedly not very graceful. But practice in writing such essays will first

### *How Judgments Stop Thought*

A judgment ("He is a fine boy," "It was a beautiful service," "Baseball is a healthful sport," "She is an awful bore") is a *conclusion*, summing up a large number of previously observed facts. The reader is probably familiar with the fact that students, when called upon to write "themes," almost always have difficulty in writing papers of the required length, because their ideas give out after a paragraph or two. The reason for this is that those early paragraphs contain so many such judgments that there is little left to be said. When the conclusions are carefully excluded, however, and observed facts are given instead, there is never any trouble about the length of papers; in fact, they tend to become too long, since inexperienced writers, when told to give facts, often give far more than are necessary, because they lack discrimination between the important and the trivial. This, however, is better than the literary constipation with which most students are afflicted as soon as they get a writing assignment.

## On Jargon

Still another consequence of judgments early in the course of a written exercise—and this applies also to hasty judgments in everyday thought—is the temporary blindness they induce. When, for example, an essay starts with the words, "He was a real Wall Street executive," or "She was a typical cute little co-ed," if we continue writing at all, we must make all our later statements consistent with those judgments. The result is that all the individual characteristics of this particular "executive" or this particular "co-ed" are lost sight of entirely; and the rest of the essay is likely to deal not with observed facts, but with the writer's *private notion* (based on previously read stories, movies, pictures, etc.) of what "Wall Street executives" or "typical co-eds" look like. The premature judgment, that is, often prevents us from seeing what is directly in front of us. Even if the writer feels sure at the beginning of a written exercise that the man he is describing is a "loafer" or that the scene he is describing is a "beautiful residential suburb," he will conscientiously keep such notions out of his head, lest his vision be obstructed. •

A few weeks of practice in writing reports, slanted reports, and reports slanted both ways will improve powers of observation, as well as ability to recognize soundness of observation in the writings of others. A sharpened sense for the distinction between facts and judgments, facts and inferences, will reduce susceptibility to the flurries of frenzied public opinion which certain people find it to their interest to arouse. Alarming judgments and inferences can be made to appear inevitable by means of skillfully slanted reports. A reader who is aware of the technique of slanting, however, cannot be stampeded by such methods. He knows too well that there may be other relevant facts which have been left out. Who worries now about the "Twenty-one Days Left to Save the American Way of Life" of the 1936 presidential campaign? Who worries now about the "snooping into private lives" and the "establishment of an American Gestapo" that were supposed to result from the 1940 census? Yet people worry about such things at the time.

## ON JARGON

by SIR ARTHUR QUILLER-COUCH

WE PARTED, Gentlemen, upon a promise to discuss the capital difficulty of Prose, as we have discussed the capital difficulty of Verse. But, although we shall come to it, on second thoughts I ask leave to break the order of my argument and to interpose some words upon a kind of writing which, from a superficial likeness, commonly passes for prose in these days, and by lazy folk is commonly written for prose,

yet actually is not prose at all; my excuse being the simple practical one that, by first clearing this sham prose out of the way, we shall the better deal with honest prose when we come to it. The proper difficulties of prose will remain; but we shall be agreed in understanding what it is, or at any rate what it is not, that we talk about. I remember to have heard somewhere of a religious body in the

From *On the Art of Writing* by Arthur Quiller-Couch. Courtesy of G. P. Putnam's Sons.

## How Writing Is Written

United States of America which had reason to suspect one of its churches of accepting spiritual consolation from a colored preacher—an offense against the laws of the Synod—and despatched a Disciplinary Committee with power to act; and of the Committee's returning to report itself unable to take any action under its terms of reference, for that while a person undoubtedly colored had undoubtedly occupied the pulpit, and had audibly spoken from it in the Committee's presence, the performance could be brought within no definition of preaching known or discoverable. So it is with that infirmity of speech—that flux, that determination of words to the mouth, or to the pen,—which, though it be familiar to you in parliamentary debates, in newspapers, and as the staple language of Blue Books, Committees, Official Reports, I take leave to introduce to you as prose which is not prose and under its real name of Jargon.

You must not confuse this Jargon with what is called Journalese. The two overlap, indeed, and have a knack of assimilating each other's vices. But Jargon finds, maybe, the most of its votaries among good *douce* people who have never written to or for a newspaper in their life, who would never talk of "adverse climatic conditions" when they mean "bad weather"; who have never trifled with verbs such as "obsess," "recrudesce," "envisage," "adumbrate," or with phrases, such as "the psychological moment," "the true inwardness," "it gives furiously to think." It dallies with Latinity,—*"sub silentio," "de die in diem," "cui bono?"* (always in the sense, unsuspected by Cicero, of "What is the profit?")—but not for the sake of style. Your journalist at the worst is an artist in his way; he daubs paint of this kind upon the lily with professional zeal; the more fragrant (or, to use his own

word, arresting) the pigment, the happier is his soul. Like the Babu he is trying all the while to embellish our poor language, to make it more floriferous, more poetical—like the Babu, for example, who, reporting his mother's death wrote, "Regret to inform you, the hand that rocked the cradle has kicked the bucket."

*There* is metaphor; *there* is ornament; *there* is a sense of poetry, though as yet groping in a world unrealized. No such *gusto* marks—no such zeal, artistic or professional, animates—the practitioners of Jargon, who are, most of them (I repeat), *douce* respectable persons. Caution is its father; the instinct to save everything and especially trouble; its mother, Indolence. It looks precise, but is not. It is, in these times, safe: a thousand men have said it before and not one to your knowledge had been prosecuted for it. And so, like respectability in Chicago, Jargon stalks unchecked in our midst. It is becoming the language of Parliament; it has become the medium through which Boards of Government, County Councils, Syndicates, Committees, Commercial Firms express the processes as well as the conclusions of their thought and so voice the reason of their being.

Has a Minister to say "No" in the House of Commons? Some men are constitutionally incapable of saying no; but the Minister conveys it thus: "The answer to the question is in the negative." That means "No." Can you discover it to mean anything less, or anything more except that the speaker is a pompous person?—which was no part of the information demanded.

That is Jargon, and it happens to be accurate. But as a rule Jargon is by no means accurate, its method being to walk circumspectly around its target; and its faith, that having done so it has either hit

## On Jargon

the bull's-eye or at least achieved something equivalent, and safer.

Thus the clerk of a Board of Guardians will minute that—

In the case of John Jenkins deceased the coffin provided was of the usual character.

Now this is not accurate. "In the case of John Jenkins deceased," for whom a coffin was supplied, it is wholly superfluous to tell us that he is deceased. But actually John Jenkins never had more than one case, and that was the coffin. The clerk says he had two,—a coffin in a case; but I suspect the clerk to be mistaken, and I am sure he errs in telling us that the coffin was of the usual character; for coffins have no character, usual or unusual.

For another example (I shall not tell you whence derived)—

In the case of every candidate who is placed in the first class [So you see the lucky fellow gets a case as well as a first-class. He might be a stuffed animal: perhaps he is]—In the case of every candidate who is placed in the first class the class-list will show by some convenient mark (1) the Section or Sections for proficiency in which he is placed in the first class and (2) the Section or Sections (if any) in which he has passed with special distinction.

"The Section or Sections (if any)"—But how, if they are not any, could they be indicated by a mark however convenient?

The Examiners will have regard to the style and method of the candidate's answers, and will give credit for excellence in *these respects*.

Have you begun to detect the two main vices of Jargon? The first is that it uses circumlocution rather than short straight speech. It says: "In the case of John Jen-

kins deceased the coffin" when it means "John Jenkins's coffin"; and its yea is not yea, neither is its nay nay; but its answer is in the affirmative or in the negative, as the foolish and superfluous "case" may be. The second vice is that it habitually chooses vague woolly abstract nouns rather than concrete ones. I shall have something to say by-and-by about the concrete noun, and how you should ever be struggling for it whether in prose or in verse. For the moment I content myself with advising you, if you would write masculine English, never to forget the old tag of your Latin Grammar—

Masculine will only be  
Things that you can touch and see.

But since these lectures are meant to be a course in First Aid to writing, I will content myself with one or two extremely rough rules; yet I shall be disappointed if you do not find them serviceable.

The first is: Whenever in your reading you come across one of these words, *case, instance, character, nature, condition, persuasion, degree*, whenever in writing your pen betrays you to one or another of them—pull yourself up and take thought. If it be "case" (I choose it as Jargon's dearest child—"in Heaven yclept Metonymy") turn to the dictionary, if you will, and seek out what meaning can be derived from *casus*, its Latin ancestor, then try how, with a little trouble, you can extricate yourself from that case. The odds are, you will feel like a butterfly who has discarded his chrysalis.

Here are some specimens to try your hand on:

(1) All those tears which inundated Lord Hugh Cecil's head were dry in the case of Mr. Harold Cox.

## How Writing Is Written

Poor Mr. Cox! left gasping in his aquarium!

(2) [From a cigar-merchant.] In any case, let us send you a case on approval.

(3) It is contended that Consols have fallen in consequence; but such is by no means the case.

"Such," by the way, is another spoilt child of Jargon, especially in Committee's Rules—"Co-opted members may be eligible as such; such members to continue to serve for such time as"—and so on.

(4) Even in the purely Celtic areas only in two or three cases do the Bishops bear Celtic names.

For "cases" read "dioceses."

*Instance.* In most instances the players were below their form.

But what were they playing at? Instances?

*Character—Nature.* There can be no doubt that the accident was caused through the dangerous nature of the spot, the hidden character of the by-road, and the utter absence of any warning or danger signal.

Mark the foggy wording of it all! And yet the man hit something and broke his neck! Contrast that explanation with the verdict of a coroner's jury in the west of England on a drowned postman: "We find that deceased met his death by an act of God, caused by sudden overflowing of the river Walkham and helped out by the scandalous neglect of the way-wardens."

The Aintree course is notoriously of a trying nature.

On account of its light character, purity, and age, Usher's whiskey is a whiskey that will agree with you.

*Order.* The *mésalliance* was of a pronounced order.

*Condition.* He was conveyed to his place of residence in an intoxicated condition.

"He was carried home drunk."

*Quality and Section.* Mr. —, exhibiting no less than five works, all of a superior quality, figures prominently in the oil section.

—This was written of an exhibition of pictures.

*Degree.* A singular degree of rarity prevails in the earlier editions of this romance.

That is Jargon. In prose it runs simply "The earlier editions of this romance are rare"—or "are very rare"—or, even (if you believe what I take leave to doubt), "are singularly rare"; which should mean that they are rarer than the editions of any other work in the world.

Now what I ask you to consider about these quotations is that in each the writer was using Jargon to shirk prose, palming off periphrases upon us when with a little trouble he could have gone straight to the point. "A singular degree of rarity prevails," "the accident was caused through the dangerous nature of the spot," "but such is by no means the case." We may not be capable of much; but we can all write better than that, if we take a little trouble. In place of, "the Aintree course is of a trying nature" we can surely say "Aintree is a trying course" or "the Aintree course is a trying one"—just that and nothing more.

For another rule—just as rough and ready, but just as useful: Train your suspicions to bristle up whenever you come upon "as regards," "with regard to," "in respect of," "in connection with," "according as to whether," and the like. They are all dodges of Jargon, circumlocutions for

evading this or that simple statement; and I say that it is not enough to avoid them nine times out of ten, or nine-and-ninety times out of a hundred. You should never use them. That is positive enough, I hope? Though I cannot admire his style, I admire the man who wrote to me, "Re Tennyson—your remarks anent his *In Memoriam* make me sick"; for though *re* is not a preposition of the first water, and "anent" has enjoyed its day, the finish crowned the work. But here are a few specimens far, very far, worse:—

The special difficulty in Professor Minoceli's case [our old friend "case" again] arose *in connexion with* the view he holds *relative* to the historical value of the opening pages of Genesis.

That is Jargon. In prose, even taking the miserable sentence as it stands constructed, we should write "the difficulty arose over the views he holds about the historical value," etc.

From a popular novelist:—

I was entirely indifferent *as to* the results of the game, caring nothing at all *as to* whether *I had losses or gains*—

Cut out the first "as" in "as to," and the second "as to" altogether, and the sentence begins to be prose—"I was indifferent to the results of the game, caring nothing whether I had losses or gains."

But why, like Dogberry, have "had losses"? Why not simply "lost"? Let us try again. "I was entirely indifferent to the results of the game, caring nothing at all whether I won or lost."

Still the sentence remains absurd; for the second clause but repeats the first without adding one jot. For if you care not at all whether you win or lose, you must be entirely indifferent to the results of the game. So why not say, "I was careless if I won or lost," and have done with it?

A man of simple and charming character, he was fitly *associated with* the distinction of the Order of Merit.

I take this gem with some others from a collection made three years ago, by the *Oxford Magazine*; and I hope you admire it as one beyond price. "He was associated with the distinction of the Order of Merit" means "he was given the Order of Merit." If the members of that Order make a society then he was associated with them; but you cannot associate a man with a distinction. The inventor of such fine writing would doubtless have answered Canning's Needy Knife-grinder with:—

I associate thee with sixpence! I will see thee in another association first!

But let us close our *florilegium* and attempt to illustrate Jargon by the converse method of taking a famous piece of English (say Hamlet's soliloquy) and remolding a few lines of it in this fashion:—

To be, or the contrary? Whether the former or the latter be preferable would seem to admit of some difference of opinion; the answer in the present case being of an affirmative or of a negative character according as to whether one elects on the one hand to mentally suffer the disfavor of fortune, albeit in an extreme degree, or on the other to boldly envisage adverse conditions in the prospect of eventually bringing them to a conclusion. The condition of sleep is similar to, if not indistinguishable from that of death; and with the addition of finality the former might be considered identical with the latter: so that in this connection it might be argued with regard to sleep that, could the addition be effected, a termination would be put to the endurance of a multiplicity of inconveniences, not to mention a number of downright evils incidental to our fallen humanity, and thus a consummation achieved of a most gratifying nature.



## from THE NAME AND NATURE OF POETRY

by A. E. HOUSMAN

POETRY indeed seems to me more physical than intellectual. A year or two ago, in common with others, I received from America a request that I would define poetry. I replied that I could no more define poetry than a terrier can define a rat, but that I thought we both recognized the object by the symptoms it provokes in us. One of these symptoms was described in connection with another object by Eliphaz the Temanite: "A spirit passed before my face: the hair of my flesh stood up." Experience has taught me, while I am shaving of a morning, to keep watch over my thoughts, because, if a line of poetry strays into my memory, my skin bristles so that the razor ceases to act. This particular symptom is accompanied by a shiver down the spine; there is another which consists in a constriction of the throat and a precipitation of water to the eyes; and there is a third which I can only describe by borrowing a phrase from one of Keats's last letters, where he says, speaking of Fanny Brawne, "everything that reminds me of her goes through me like a spear." The seat of this sensation is the pit of the stomach.

My opinions on poetry are necessarily tinged, perhaps I should say tainted, by the circumstance that I have come into contact with it on two sides. We were saying a while ago that poetry is a very wide term, and inconveniently comprehensive: so comprehensive is it that it embraces two books, fortunately not large ones, of my own. I know how this stuff came into existence; and though I have no right to assume that any other poetry

came into existence in the same way, yet I find reason to believe that some poetry, and quite good poetry, did. Wordsworth for instance says that poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings, and Burns has left us this confession, "I have two or three times in my life composed from the wish rather than the impulse, but I never succeeded to any purpose." In short I think that the production of poetry, in its first stage, is less an active than a passive and involuntary process; and if I were obliged, not to define poetry, but to name the class of things to which it belongs, I should call it a secretion; whether a natural secretion, like turpentine in the fir, or a morbid secretion, like the pearl in the oyster, I think that my own case, though I may not deal with the material so cleverly as the oyster does, is the latter; because I have seldom written poetry unless I was rather out of health, and the experience, though pleasurable, was generally agitating and exhausting. If only that you may know what to avoid, I will give some account of the process.

Having drunk a pint of beer at luncheon—beer is a sedative to the brain, and my afternoons are the least intellectual portion of my life—I would go out for a walk of two or three hours. As I went along, thinking of nothing in particular, only looking at things around me and following the progress of the seasons, there would flow into my mind, with sudden and unaccountable emotion, sometimes a line or two of verse, sometimes a whole stanza at once, accompanied, not preceded, by a vague notion of the poem which they

From A. E. Housman, *The Name and Nature of Poetry*. By permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers.

were destined to form part of. Then there would usually be a lull of an hour or so, then perhaps the spring would bubble up again. I say bubble up because, so far as I could make out, the source of the suggestions thus proffered to the brain was an abyss which I have already had occasion to mention, the pit of the stomach. When I got home I wrote them down, leaving gaps, and hoping that further inspiration might be forthcoming another day. Sometimes it was, if I took my walks in a receptive and expectant frame of mind; but sometimes the poem had to be taken in hand and completed by the brain, which was apt to be a matter of trouble

and anxiety, involving trial and disappointment, and sometimes ending in failure. I happen to remember distinctly the genesis of the piece which stands last in my first volume. Two of the stanzas, I do not say which, came into my head, just as they are printed, while I was crossing the corner of Hampstead Heath between the Spaniard's Inn and the footpath to Temple Fortune. A third stanza came with a little coaxing after tea. One more was needed, but it did not come: I had to turn to and compose it myself, and that was a laborious business. I wrote it thirteen times, and it was more than a twelve-month before I got it right.

## Foreword to POEMS 1925-1940

by LOUIS MACNEICE

WHEN A MAN collects his poems, people think he is dead. I am collecting mine not because I am dead, but because my past life is. Like most other people in the British Isles I have little idea what will happen next. I shall go on writing, but my writing will presumably be different.

Everything I have put into this book seems to me worth reading, though some of the poems, especially the softer adolescent ones in the first section, are very limited. I have included a little light verse because man's lightheadedness should sometimes be articulate.

All poems are not written the same way. Critics forget this. There are occasions for flatness and hyperbole, for concentration and diffuseness, for regular and irregular form, for both the unusual and the obvious, for uplift and understatement. A few of these poems are perhaps obscure, but others will only be found obscure by peo-

ple who try to be too clever: my poem "Snow," for instance, means exactly what it says.

"Autumn Journal," the long topical poem I wrote in the Fall of 1938, is in a sense a failure; it fails in depth. I had foreseen that failure. We shall not be capable of depth—of tragedy or *great* poetry—until we have made sense of our world. "Autumn Journal" remains a journal—topical, personal, rambling, but, failing other things, honest.

I should like people to read these poems aloud; with a few exceptions each line has been approved by my ear. And I would ask my readers not to be snobs; I write poetry not because it is smart to be a poet but because I enjoy it, as one enjoys swimming or swearing, and also because it is my road to freedom and knowledge.

From Louis MacNeice, *Poems*. Copyright, 1939, by the Modern Library, Inc. Reprinted by permission of Random House, Inc.

## from Foreword to THE STILL CENTRE

by STEPHEN SPENDER

POETRY does not state truth, it states the conditions within which something felt is true. Even while he is writing about the little portion of reality which is part of his experience, the poet may be conscious of a different reality outside. His problem is to relate the small truth to the sense of a wider, perhaps theoretically known, truth outside his experience. Poems exist within their own limits, they do not exclude the possibility of other things, which might also be subjects of poetry, being different. They remain true to experience and they establish the proportions of that experience. One day a poet will write truthfully about the heroism as well as the fears and anxiety of today; but such

a poetry will be very different from the utilitarian heroics of the moment.

I think that there is a certain pressure of external events on poets today, making them tend to write about what is outside their own limited experience. The violence of the times we are living in, the necessity of sweeping and general and immediate action, tend to dwarf the experience of the individual, and to make his immediate environment and occupations perhaps something that he is even ashamed of. For this reason, in my most recent poems, I have deliberately turned back to a kind of writing which is more personal, and I have included within my subjects weakness and fantasy and illusion.

From Stephen Spender, *The Still Centre*. Copyright, 1942, by Stephen Spender. Reprinted by permission of Random House, Inc.

## from Foreword to THE SELECTED POETRY OF ROBINSON JEFFERS

by ROBINSON JEFFERS

LONG AGO, . . . it became evident to me that poetry—if it was to survive at all—must reclaim some of the power and reality that it was so hastily surrendering to prose. The modern French poetry of that time, and the most “modern” of the English poetry, seemed to me thoroughly defeatist, as if poetry were in terror of prose, and desperately trying to save its soul from the victor by giving up its body. It was becoming slight and fantastic, ab-

stract, unreal, eccentric; and was not even saving its soul, for these are generally anti-poetic qualities. It must reclaim substance and sense, and physical and psychological reality. This feeling has been basic in my mind since then. It led me to write narrative poetry, and to draw subjects from contemporary life; to present aspects of life that modern poetry had generally avoided; and to attempt the expression of philosophic and scientific ideas in verse.

From *The Selected Poetry of Robinson Jeffers*. Copyright, 1937, by Robinson Jeffers. Reprinted by permission of Random House, Inc.

## *The Selected Poetry of Robinson Jeffers*

It was not in my mind to open new fields for poetry, but only to reclaim old freedom.

Still it was obvious that poetry and prose are different things; their provinces overlap, but must not be confused. Prose, of course, is free of all fields; it seemed to me, reading poetry and trying to write it, that poetry is bound to concern itself chiefly with permanent things and the permanent aspects of life. That was perhaps the great distinction between them, as regards subject and material. Prose can discuss matters of the moment; poetry must deal with things that a reader two thousand years away could understand and be moved by. This excludes much of the circumstance of modern life, especially in the cities. Fashions, forms of machinery, the more complex social, financial, political adjustments, and so forth, are all ephemeral, exceptional; they exist but will never exist again. Poetry must concern itself with (relatively) permanent things. These have poetic value; the ephemeral has only news value.

Another formative principle came to me from a phrase of Nietzsche's: "The poets? The poets lie too much." I was nineteen when the phrase stuck in my mind; a dozen years passed before it worked effectively, and I decided not to tell lies in verse. Not to feign any emotion that I did not feel; not to pretend to believe in optimism or pessimism, or irreversible progress; not to say anything because it was popular, or generally accepted, or fashionable in intellectual circles, unless I myself believed it; and not to believe easily. These negatives limit the field; I am not recommending them but for my own occasions.

Here are the principles that conditioned the verse in this book before it was writ-

ten; but it would not have been written at all except for certain accidents that changed and directed my life. (Some kind of verse I should have written, of course, but not this kind.) The first of these accidents was my meeting with the woman to whom this book is dedicated, and her influence, constant since that time. My nature is cold and indiscriminating; she excited and focused it, gave it eyes and nerves and sympathies. She never saw any of my poems until they were finished and typed, yet by her presence and conversation she has co-authored every one of them. Sometimes I think there must be some value in them, if only for that reason. She is more like a woman in a Scotch ballad, passionate, untamed and rather heroic—or like a falcon—than like any ordinary person.

A second piece of pure accident brought us to the Monterey coast mountains, where for the first time in my life I could see people living—amid magnificent unspoiled scenery—essentially as they did in the Idyls or the Sagas, or in Homer's Ithaca. Here was life purged of its ephemeral accretions. Men were riding after cattle, or plowing the headland, hovered by white sea-gulls, as they have done for thousands of years, and will for thousands of years to come. Here was contemporary life that was also permanent life; and not shut from the modern world but conscious of it and related to it; capable of expressing its spirit, but unencumbered by the mass of poetically irrelevant details and complexities that make a civilization.

By this time I was nearing thirty, and still a whole series of accidents was required to stir my lazy energies to the point of writing verse that seemed to be—whether good or bad—at least my own voice.

# Preface to the first edition of THE DARING YOUNG MAN ON THE FLYING TRAPEZE

by WILLIAM SAROYAN

I AM writing this preface of the first edition so that in the event that this book is issued in a second edition I will be able to write a preface to the second edition, explaining what I said in the preface to the first edition and adding a few remarks about what I have been doing in the meantime, and so on.

In the event that the book reaches a third edition, it is my plan to write a preface to the third edition, covering all that I said in the prefaces to the first and second editions, and it is my plan to go on writing prefaces for new editions of this book until I die. After that I hope there will be children and grandchildren to keep up the good work.

In this early preface, when I have no idea how many copies of the book are going to be sold, the only thing I can do is talk about how I came to write these stories.

Years ago when I was getting a thorough grammar-school education in my home town I found out that stories were something very odd that some sort of men had been turning out (for some odd reason) for hundreds of years, and that there were rules governing the writing of stories.

I immediately began to study all the classic rules, including Ring Lardner's, and in the end I discovered that the rules were wrong.

The trouble was, they had been leaving me out, and as far as I could tell I was the most important element in the matter, so I made some new rules.

I wrote rule Number One when I was

eleven and had just been sent home from the fourth grade for having talked out of turn and meant it.

Do not pay any attention to the rules other people make, I wrote. They make them for their own protection, and to hell with them. (I was pretty sore that day.)

Several months later I discovered rule Number Two, which caused a sensation. At any rate, it was a sensation with me. This rule was: Forget Edgar Allan Poe and O. Henry and write the kind of stories you feel like writing. Forget everybody who ever wrote anything.

Since that time I have added four other rules and I have found this number to be enough. Sometimes I do not have to bother about rules at all, and I just sit down and write. Now and then I stand and write.

My third rule was: Learn to typewrite, so you can turn out stories as fast as Zane Grey.

It is one of my best rules.

But rules without a system are, as every good writer will tell you, utterly inadequate. You can leave out "utterly" and the sentence will mean the same thing, but it is always nicer to throw in an "utterly" whenever possible. All successful writers believe that one word by itself hasn't enough meaning and that it is best to emphasize the meaning of one word with the help of another. Some writers will go so far as to help an innocent word with as many as four and five other words, and at times they will kill an innocent word by charity and it will take years and years for some ignorant writer who doesn't

From William Saroyan, *The Daring Young Man on the Flying Trapeze*, 1934. Copyright, 1934, by the Modern Library, Inc. Reprinted by permission of Random House, Inc.

## Writing Prose

know adjectives at all to resurrect the word that was killed by kindness.

Anyway, these stories are the result of a method of composition.

I call it the Festival or Fascist method of composition, and it works this way:

Someone who isn't a writer begins to want to be a writer and he keeps on wanting to be one for ten years, and by that time he has convinced all his relatives and friends and even himself that he *is* a writer, but he hasn't written a thing and he is no longer a boy, so he is getting worried. All he needs now is a system. Some authorities claim there are as many as fifteen systems, but actually there are only two: (1) you can decide to write like Anatole France or Alexandre Dumas or somebody else, or (2) you can decide to forget that you are a writer at all and you can decide to sit down at your typewriter and put words on paper, one at a time, in the best fashion you know how—which brings me to the matter of style.

The matter of style is one that always excites controversy, but to me it is as simple as A B C, if not simpler.

A writer can have, ultimately, one of two styles: he can write in a manner that implies that death is inevitable, or he can write in a manner that implies that death is *not* inevitable. Every style ever employed by a writer has been influenced by one

or another of these attitudes toward death.

If you write as if you believe that ultimately you and everyone else alive will be dead, there is a chance that you will write in a pretty earnest style. Otherwise you are apt to be either pompous or soft. On the other hand, in order not to be a fool, you must believe that as much as death is inevitable life is inevitable. That is, the earth is inevitable, and people and other living things on it are inevitable, but that no man can remain on the earth very long. You do not have to be melodramatically tragic about this. As a matter of fact, you can be as amusing as you like about it. It is really one of the basically humorous things, and it has all sorts of possibilities for laughter. If you will remember that living people are as good as dead, you will be able to perceive much that is very funny in their conduct that you perhaps might never have thought of perceiving if you did not believe that they were as good as dead.

The most solid advice, though, for a writer is this, I think: Try to learn to breathe deeply, really to taste food when you eat, and when you sleep, really to sleep. Try as much as possible to be wholly alive, with all your might, and when you laugh, laugh like hell, and when you get angry, get good and angry. Try to be alive. You will be dead soon enough.

## WRITING PROSE

by W. SOMERSET MAUGHAM

I HAVE NEVER had more than two English lessons in my life, for though I wrote essays at school, I do not remember that I ever received any instruction on how to

put sentences together. The two lessons I have had were given me so late in life that I am afraid I cannot hope greatly to profit by them. The first was only a few

From: *The Summing Up*, by W. Somerset Maugham, copyright, 1938, reprinted by permission of Doubleday and Company, Inc.

## How Writing Is Written

years ago. I was spending some weeks in London and had engaged as temporary secretary a young woman. She was shy, rather pretty, and absorbed in a love affair with a married man. I had written a book called *Cakes and Ale*, and, the typescript arriving one Saturday morning, I asked her if she would be good enough to take it home and correct it over the weekend. I meant her only to make a note of mistakes in spelling that the typist might have made and point out errors occasioned by a handwriting that is not always easy to decipher. But she was a conscientious young person and she took me more literally than I intended. When she brought back the typescript on Monday morning it was accompanied by four foolscap sheets of corrections. I must confess that at the first glance I was a trifle vexed; but then I thought that it would be silly of me not to profit, if I could, by the trouble she had taken and so sat me down to examine them. I suppose the young woman had taken a course at a secretarial college and she had gone through my novel in the same methodical way as her masters had gone through her essays. The remarks that filled the four neat pages of foolscap were incisive and severe. I could not but surmise that the professor of English at the secretarial college did not mince matters. He took a marked line, there could be no doubt about that; and he did not allow that there might be two opinions about anything. His apt pupil would have nothing to do with a preposition at the end of a sentence. A mark of exclamation betokened her disapproval of a colloquial phrase. She had a feeling that you must not use the same word twice on a page and she was ready every time with a synonym to put in its place. If I had indulged myself in the luxury of a sentence of ten lines, she wrote: "Clarify this. Better break

it up into two or more periods." When I had availed myself of the pleasant pause that is indicated by a semicolon, she noted: "A full stop"; and if I had ventured upon a colon she remarked stingingly: "Obsolete." But the harshest stroke of all was her comment on what I thought was rather a good joke: "Are you sure of your facts?" Taking it all in all I am bound to conclude that the professor at her college would not have given me very high marks.

The second lesson I had was given me by a don, both intelligent and charming, who happened to be staying with me when I was myself correcting the typescript of another book. He was good enough to offer to read it. I hesitated, because I knew that he judged from a standpoint of excellence that is hard to attain; and though I was aware that he had a profound knowledge of Elizabethan literature, his inordinate admiration for *Esther Waters* made me doubtful of his discernment in the productions of our own day: no one could attach so great a value to that work who had an intimate knowledge of the French novel during the nineteenth century. But I was anxious to make my book as good as I could and I hoped to benefit by his criticisms. They were in point of fact lenient. They interested me peculiarly because I inferred that this was the way in which he dealt with the compositions of undergraduates. My don had, I think, a natural gift for language, which it has been his business to cultivate; his taste appeared to me faultless. I was much struck by his insistence on the force of individual words. He liked the stronger word rather than the euphonious. To give an example, I had written that a statue would be placed in a certain square and he suggested that I should write: the statue will stand. I had not done that because my ear was offended by the allitera-

tion. I noticed also that he had a feeling that words should be used not only to balance a sentence but to balance an idea. This is sound, for an idea may lose its effect if it is delivered abruptly; but it is a matter of delicacy, since it may well lead to verbiage. Here a knowledge of stage dialogue should help. An actor will sometimes say to an author: "Couldn't you give me a word or two more in this speech? It seems to take away all the point of my line if I have nothing else to say." As I listened to my don's remarks I could not but think how much better I should write now if in my youth I had had the advantage of such sensible, broad-minded and kindly advice.

As it is, I have had to teach myself. I have looked at the stories I wrote when I was very young in order to discover what natural aptitude I had, my original stock-in-trade, before I developed it by taking thought. The manner had a superciliousness that perhaps my years excused and an irascibility that was a defect of nature; but I am speaking now only of the way in which I expressed myself. It seems to me that I had a natural lucidity and a knack for writing easy dialogue.

When Henry Arthur Jones, then a well-known playwright, read my first novel, he told a friend that in due course I should be one of the most successful dramatists of the day. I suppose he saw in it directness and an effective way of presenting a scene that suggested a sense of the theater. My language was commonplace, my vocabulary limited, my grammar shaky, and my phrases hackneyed. But to write was an instinct that seemed as natural to me as to breathe, and I did not stop to consider if I wrote well or badly. It was not till some years later that it dawned upon me that it was a delicate art that must be painfully acquired. The discovery was

forced upon me by the difficulty I found in getting my meaning down on paper. I wrote dialogue fluently, but when it came to a page of description I found myself entangled in all sorts of quandaries. I would struggle for a couple of hours over two or three sentences that I could in no way manage to straighten out. I made up my mind to teach myself how to write. Unfortunately I had no one to help me. I made many mistakes. If I had had someone to guide me like the charming don of whom I spoke just now, I might have been saved much time. Such a one might have told me that such gifts as I had lay in one direction and that they must be cultivated in that direction; it was useless to try to do something for which I had no aptitude. But at that time a florid prose was admired. Richness of texture was sought by means of a jeweled phrase and sentences stiff with exotic epithets; the ideal was a brocade so heavy with gold that it stood up by itself. The intelligent young read Walter Pater with enthusiasm. My common sense suggested to me that it was anemic stuff; behind those elaborate, gracious periods I was conscious of a tired, wan personality. I was young, lusty, and energetic; I wanted fresh air, action, violence, and I found it hard to breathe that dead, heavily scented atmosphere and sit in those hushed rooms in which it was indecorous to speak above a whisper. But I would not listen to my common sense. I persuaded myself that this was the height of culture and turned a scornful shoulder on the outside world where men shouted and swore, played the fool, wenched and got drunk. I read *Intentions* and *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. I was intoxicated by the color and rareness of the fantastic words that thickly stud the pages of *Salome*. Shocked by the poverty of my own vocabulary, I went to the British Mu-



## How Writing Is Written

seum with pencil and paper and noted down the names of curious jewels, the Byzantine hues of old enamels, the sensual feel of textiles, and made elaborate sentences to bring them in. Fortunately I could never find an opportunity to use them and they lie there yet in an old notebook ready for anyone who has a mind to write nonsense. It was generally thought then that the Authorized Version of the Bible was the greatest piece of prose that the English language has produced. I read it diligently, especially the Song of Solomon, jotting down for future use turns of phrase that struck me and making lists of unusual or beautiful words. I studied Jeremy Taylor's *Holy Dying*. In order to assimilate his style I copied out passages and then tried to write them down from memory.

The first fruit of this labor was a little book about Andalusia called *The Land of the Blessed Virgin*. I had occasion to read parts of it the other day. I know Andalusia a great deal better now than I knew it then, and I have changed my mind about a good many things of which I wrote. Since it has continued in America to have a small sale, it occurred to me that it might be worth while to revise it. I soon saw that this was impossible. The book was written by someone I have completely forgotten. It bored me to distraction. But what I am concerned with is the prose, for it was as an exercise in style that I wrote it. It is wistful, allusive, and elaborate. It has neither ease nor spontaneity. It smells of hothouse plants and Sunday dinner like the air in the greenhouse that leads out of the dining-room of a big house in Bayswater. There are a great many melodious adjectives. The vocabulary is sentimental. It does not remind one of an Italian brocade, with its rich pattern of gold,

but of a curtain material designed by Burne-Jones and reproduced by Morris.

I do not know whether it was a subconscious feeling that this sort of writing was contrary to my bent or a naturally methodical cast of mind that led me then to turn my attention to the writers of the Augustan Period. The prose of Swift enchanted me. I made up my mind that this was the perfect way to write and I started to work on him in the same way as I had done with Jeremy Taylor. I chose *The Tale of a Tub*. It is said that when the Dean re-read it in his old age he cried: "What genius I had then!" To my mind his genius was better shown in other works. It is a tiresome allegory and the irony is facile. But the style is admirable. I cannot imagine that English can be better written. Here are no flowery periods, fantastic turns of phrase or high-flown images. It is a civilized prose, natural, discreet, and pointed. There is no attempt to surprise by an extravagant vocabulary. It looks as though Swift made do with the first word that came to hand, but since he had an acute and logical brain it was always the right one, and he put it in the right place. The strength and balance of his sentences are due to an exquisite taste. As I had done before I copied passages and then tried to write them out again from memory. I tried altering words or the order in which they were set. I found that the only possible words were those Swift had used and that the order in which he had placed them was the only possible order. It is an impeccable prose.

But perfection has one grave defect: it is apt to be dull. Swift's prose is like a French canal, bordered with poplars, that runs through a gracious and undulating country. Its tranquil charm fills you with satisfaction, but it neither excites the emo-

tions nor stimulates the imagination. You go on and on and presently you are a trifle bored. So, much as you may admire Swift's wonderful lucidity, his terseness, his naturalness, his lack of affectation, you find your attention wandering after a while unless his matter peculiarly interests you. I think if I had my time over again I would give to the prose of Dryden the close study I gave to that of Swift. I did not come across it till I had lost the inclination to take so much pains. The prose of Dryden is delicious. It has not the perfection of Swift nor the easy elegance of Addison, but it has a springtime gaiety, a conversational ease, a blithe spontaneity that are enchanting. Dryden was a very good poet, but it is not the general opinion that he had a lyrical quality; it is strange that it is just this that sings in his softly sparkling prose. Prose had never been written in England like that before; it has seldom been written like that since. Dryden flourished at a happy moment. He had in his bones the sonorous periods and the baroque massiveness of Jacobean language and under the influence of the nimble and well-bred felicity that he learnt from the French he turned it into an instrument that was fit not only for solemn themes but also to express the light thought of the passing moment. He was the first of the rococo artists. If Swift reminds you of a French canal Dryden recalls an English river winding its cheerful way round hills, through quietly busy towns and by nestling villages, pausing now in a noble reach and then running powerfully through a woodland country. It is alive, varied, windswept; and it has the pleasant open-air smell of England.

The work I did was certainly very good for me. I began to write better; I did not write well. I wrote stiffly and self-con-

sciously. I tried to get a pattern into my sentences, but did not see that the pattern was evident. I took care how I placed my words, but did not reflect that an order that was natural at the beginning of the eighteenth century was most unnatural at the beginning of ours. My attempt to write in the manner of Swift made it impossible for me to achieve the effect of inevitable rightness that was just what I so much admired in him. I then wrote a number of plays and ceased to occupy myself with anything but dialogue. It was not till five years had passed that I set out again to write a novel. By then I no longer had any ambition to be a stylist; I put aside all thought of fine writing. I wanted to write without any frills of language, in as bare and unaffected a manner as I could. I had so much to say that I could afford to waste no words. I wanted merely to set down the facts. I began with the impossible aim of using no adjectives at all. I thought that if you could find the exact term a qualifying epithet could be dispensed with. As I saw it in my mind's eye my book would have the appearance of an immensely long telegram in which for economy's sake you had left out every word that was not necessary to make the sense clear. I have not read it since I corrected the proofs and do not know how near I came to doing what I tried. My impression is that it is written at least more naturally than anything I had written before; but I am sure that it is often slipshod and I daresay there are in it a good many mistakes in grammar.

Since then I have written many other books; and though ceasing my methodical study of the old masters (for though the spirit is willing, the flesh is weak), I have continued with increasing assiduity to try to write better. I discovered my limita-

tions and it seemed to me that the only sensible thing was to aim at what excellence I could within them. I knew that I had no lyrical quality. I had a small vocabulary and no efforts that I could make to enlarge it much availed me. I had little gift of metaphor; the original and striking simile seldom occurred to me. Poetic flights and the great imaginative sweep were beyond my powers. I could admire them in others as I could admire their far-fetched tropes and the unusual but suggestive language in which they clothed their thoughts, but my own invention never presented me with such embellishments; and I was tired of trying to do what did not come easily to me. On the other hand, I had an acute power of observation and it seemed to me that I could see a great many things that other people missed. I could put down in clear terms what I saw. I had a logical sense, and if no great feeling for the richness and strangeness of words, at all events a lively appreciation of their sound. I knew that I should never write as well as I could wish, but I thought with pains I could arrive at writing as well as my natural defects allowed. On taking thought it seemed to me that I must aim at lucidity, simplicity and euphony. I have put these three qualities in the order of the importance I assigned to them.

I have never had much patience with the writers who claim from the reader an effort to understand their meaning. You have only to go to the great philosophers to see that it is possible to express with lucidity the most subtle reflections. You may find it difficult to understand the thought of Hume, and if you have no philosophical training its implications will doubtless escape you; but no one with any education at all can fail to understand exactly

what the meaning of each sentence is. Few people have written English with more grace than Berkeley. There are two sorts of obscurity that you find in writers. One is due to negligence and the other to willfulness. People often write obscurely because they have never taken the trouble to learn to write clearly. This sort of obscurity you find too often in modern philosophers, in men of science, and even in literary critics. Here it is indeed strange. You would have thought that men who passed their lives in the study of the great masters of literature would be sufficiently sensitive to the beauty of language to write if not beautifully at least with perspicuity. Yet you will find in their works sentence after sentence that you must read twice to discover the sense. Often you can only guess at it, for the writers have evidently not said what they intended.

Another cause of obscurity is that the writer is himself not quite sure of his meaning. He has a vague impression of what he wants to say, but has not, either from lack of mental power or from laziness, exactly formulated it in his mind and it is natural enough that he should not find a precise expression for a confused idea. This is due largely to the fact that many writers think, not before, but as they write. The pen originates the thought. The disadvantage of this, and indeed it is a danger against which the author must be always on his guard, is that there is a sort of magic in the written word. The idea acquires substance by taking on a visible nature, and then stands in the way of its own clarification. But this sort of obscurity merges very easily into the willful. Some writers who do not think clearly are inclined to suppose that their thoughts have a significance greater than at first sight appears. It is flattering to believe that

they are too profound to be expressed so clearly that all who run may read, and very naturally it does not occur to such writers that the fault is with their own minds which have not the faculty of precise reflection. Here again the magic of the written word obtains. It is very easy to persuade oneself that a phrase that one does not quite understand may mean a great deal more than one realizes. From this there is only a little way to go to fall into the habit of setting down one's impressions in all their original vagueness. Fools can always be found to discover a hidden sense in them. There is another form of willful obscurity that masquerades as aristocratic exclusiveness. The author wraps his meaning in mystery so that the vulgar shall not participate in it. His soul is a secret garden into which the elect may penetrate only after overcoming a number of perilous obstacles. But this kind of obscurity is not only pretentious; it is shortsighted. For time plays it an odd trick. If the sense is meager, time reduces it to a meaningless verbiage that no one thinks of reading. This is the fate that has befallen the lucubrations of those French writers who were seduced by the example of Guillaume Apollinaire. But occasionally it throws a sharp cold light on what had seemed profound and thus discloses the fact that these contortions of language disguised very commonplace notions. There are few of Mallarmé's poems now that are not clear; one cannot fail to notice that his thought singularly lacked originality. Some of his phrases were beautiful; the materials of his verse were the poetic platitudes of his day.

Simplicity is not such an obvious merit as lucidity. I have aimed at it because I have no gift for richness. Within limits I admire richness in others, though I find

it difficult to digest in quantity. I can read one page of Ruskin with delight, but twenty only with weariness. The rolling period, the stately epithet, the noun rich in poetic associations, the subordinate clauses that give the sentence weight and magnificence, the grandeur like that of wave following wave in the open sea; there is no doubt that in all this there is something inspiring. Words thus strung together fall on the ear like music. The appeal is sensuous rather than intellectual, and the beauty of the sound leads you easily to conclude that you need not bother about the meaning. But words are tyrannical things, they exist for their meanings, and if you will not pay attention to these, you cannot pay attention at all. Your mind wanders. This kind of writing demands a subject that will suit it. It is surely out of place to write in the grand style of inconsiderable things. No one wrote in this manner with greater success than Sir Thomas Browne, but even he did not always escape this pitfall. In the last chapter of *Hydriotaphia* the matter, which is the destiny of man, wonderfully fits the baroque splendor of the language, and here the Norwich doctor produced a piece of prose that has never been surpassed in our literature; but when he describes the finding of his urns in the same splendid manner the effect (at least to my taste) is less happy.

But if richness needs gifts with which everyone is not endowed, simplicity by no means comes by nature. To achieve it needs rigid discipline. So far as I know ours is the only language in which it has been found necessary to give a name to the piece of prose which is described as the purple patch; it would not have been necessary to do so unless it were characteristic. English prose is elaborate rather than

## *How Writing Is Written*

simple. It was not always so. Nothing could be more racy, straightforward and alive than the prose of Shakespeare; but it must be remembered that this was dialogue written to be spoken. We do not know how he would have written if like Corneille he had composed prefaces to his plays. It may be that they would have been as euphuistic as the letters of Queen Elizabeth. But earlier prose, the prose of Sir Thomas More, for instance, is neither ponderous, flowery nor oratorical. It smacks of the English soil. To my mind King James's Bible has been a very harmful influence on English prose. I am not so stupid as to deny its great beauty. It is majestic. But the Bible is an oriental book. Its alien imagery has nothing to do with us. Those hyperboles, those luscious metaphors, are foreign to our genius. I cannot but think that not the least of the misfortunes that the Secession from Rome brought upon the spiritual life of our country is that this work for so long a period became the daily, and with many the only, reading of our people. Those rhythms, that powerful vocabulary, that grandiloquence, became part and parcel of the national sensibility. The plain, honest English speech was overwhelmed with ornament. Blunt Englishmen twisted their tongues to speak like Hebrew prophets. There was evidently something in the English temper to which this was congenial, perhaps a native lack of precision in thought, perhaps a naive delight in fine words for their own sake, an innate eccentricity and love of embroidery, I do not know; but the fact remains that ever since, English prose has had to struggle against the tendency to luxuriance. When from time to time the spirit of the language has reasserted itself, as it did with Dryden and the writers of Queen Anne,

it was only to be submerged once more by the pomposities of Gibbon and Dr. Johnson. When English prose recovered simplicity with Hazlitt, the Shelley of the letters, and Charles Lamb at his best, it lost it again with De Quincey, Carlyle, Meredith, and Walter Pater. It is obvious that the grand style is more striking than the plain. Indeed many people think that a style that does not attract notice is not style. They will admire Walter Pater's, but will read an essay by Matthew Arnold without giving a moment's attention to the elegance, distinction and sobriety with which he set down what he had to say.

The dictum that the style is the man is well known. It is one of those aphorisms that say too much to mean a great deal. Where is the man in Goethe, in his bird-like lyrics or in his clumsy prose? And Hazlitt? But I suppose that if a man has a confused mind he will write in a confused way, if his temper is capricious his prose will be fantastical, and if he has a quick, darting intelligence that is reminded by the matter in hand of a hundred things, he will, unless he has great self-control, load his pages with metaphor and simile. There is a great difference between the magniloquence of the Jacobean writers, who were intoxicated with the new wealth that had lately been brought into the language, and the turgidity of Gibbon and Dr. Johnson, who were the victims of bad theories. I can read every word that Dr. Johnson wrote with delight, for he had good sense, charm and wit. No one could have written better if he had not willfully set himself to write in the grand style. He knew good English when he saw it. No critic has praised Dryden's prose more aptly. He said of him that he appeared to have no art other than that of expressing with clearness what he

thought with vigor. And one of his *Lives* he finished with the words: "Whoever wishes to attain an English style, familiar but not coarse, and elegant but not ostentatious, must give his days and nights to the volumes of Addison." But when he himself sat down to write, it was with a very different aim. He mistook the orotund for the dignified. He had not the good breeding to see that simplicity and naturalness are the truest marks of distinction.

Whether you ascribe importance to euphony, the last of the three characteristics that I mentioned, must depend on the sensitiveness of your ear. A great many readers, and many admirable writers, are devoid of this quality. Poets as we know have always made a great use of alliteration. They are persuaded that the repetition of a sound gives an effect of beauty. I do not think it does so in prose. It seems to me that in prose alliteration should be used only for a special reason; when used by accident it falls on the ear very disagreeably. But its accidental use is so common that one can only suppose that the sound of it is not universally offensive. Many writers without distress will put two rhyming words together, join a monstrous long adjective to a monstrous long noun, or between the end of one word and the beginning of another have a conjunction of consonants that almost breaks your jaw. These are trivial and obvious instances. I mention them only to prove that if careful writers can do such things, it is only because they have no ear. Words have weight, sound, and appearance; it is only by considering these that you can write a sentence that is good to look at and good to listen to.

If you could write lucidly, simply, euphoniously and yet with liveliness you

would write perfectly: you would write like Voltaire. And yet we know how fatal the pursuit of liveliness may be: it may result in the tiresome acrobatics of Meredith. Macaulay and Carlyle were in their different ways arresting; but at the heavy cost of naturalness. Their flashy effects distract the mind. They destroy their persuasiveness; you would not believe a man was very intent on plowing a furrow if he carried a hoop with him and jumped through it at every other step. A good style should show no sign of effort. What is written should seem a happy accident. I think no one in France now writes more admirably than Colette, and such is the ease of her expression that you cannot bring yourself to believe that she takes any trouble over it. I am told that there are pianists who have a natural technique so that they can play in a manner that most executants can achieve only as the result of unremitting toil, and I am willing to believe that there are writers who are equally fortunate. Among them I was much inclined to place Colette. I asked her. I was exceedingly surprised to hear that she wrote everything over and over again. She told me that she would often spend a whole morning working upon a single page. But it does not matter how one gets the effect of ease. For my part, if I get it at all, it is only by strenuous effort. Nature seldom provides me with the word, the turn of phrase, that is appropriate without being far-fetched or commonplace.

I have read that Anatole France tried to use only the constructions and the vocabulary of the writers of the seventeenth century whom he so greatly admired. I do not know if it is true. If so, it may explain why there is some lack of vitality in his beautiful and simple French. But simplic-

ity is false when you do not say a thing that you should say because you cannot say it in a certain way. One should write in the manner of one's period. The language is alive and constantly changing; to try to write like the authors of a distant past can only give rise to artificiality. I should not hesitate to use the common phrases of the day, knowing that their vogue was ephemeral, or slang, though aware that in ten years it might be incomprehensible, if they gave vividness and actuality. If the style has a classical form it can support the discreet use of a phraseology that has only a local and temporary aptness. I would sooner a writer were vulgar than mincing; for life is vulgar, and it is life he seeks.

I think that we English authors have much to learn from our fellow authors in America. For American writing has escaped the tyranny of King James's Bible and American writers have been less affected by the old masters whose mode of writing is part of our culture. They have formed their style, unconsciously perhaps, more directly from the living speech that surrounds them; and at its best it has a directness, a vitality, and a drive that give our more urbane manner an air of languor. It has been an advantage to American writers, many of whom at one time or another have been reporters, that their journalism has been written in a more trenchant, nervous, graphic English than ours. For we read the newspaper as our ancestors read the Bible. Not without profit either; for the newspaper, especially when it is of the popular sort, offers us a part of experience that we writers cannot afford to miss. It is raw material straight from the knacker's yard, and we are stupid if we turn up our noses because it smells of blood and sweat. We cannot,

however willingly we would, escape the influence of this workaday prose. But the journalism of a period has very much the same style; it might all have been written by the same hand; it is impersonal. It is well to counteract its effect by reading of another kind. One can do this only by keeping constantly in touch with the writing of an age not too remote from one's own. So can one have a standard by which to test one's own style and an ideal which in one's modern way one can aim at. For my part the two writers I have found most useful to study for this purpose are Hazlitt and Cardinal Newman. I would try to imitate neither. Hazlitt can be unduly rhetorical; and sometimes his decoration is as fussy as Victorian Gothic. Newman can be a trifle flowery. But at their best both are admirable. Time has little touched their style; it is almost contemporary. Hazlitt is vivid, bracing, and energetic; he has strength and liveliness. You feel the man in his phrases, not the mean, querulous, disagreeable man that he appeared to the world that knew him, but the man within of his own ideal vision. (And the man within us is as true in reality as the man, pitiful and halting, of our outward seeming.) Newman had an exquisite grace, music, playful sometimes and sometimes grave, a woodland beauty of phrase, dignity and mellowness. Both wrote with extreme lucidity. Neither is quite as simple as the purest taste demands. Here I think Matthew Arnold excels them. Both had a wonderful balance of phrase and both knew how to write sentences pleasing to the eye. Both had an ear of extreme sensitiveness.

If anyone could combine their merits in the manner of writing of the present day, he would write as well as it is possible for anyone to write.

## THE PATTERN-MAKERS

by WILLIAM MCFEE

IT WAS A WORLD within a world, and that again lost in the mighty maze of London, and I remember with affection the days I spent there.

Between us, up there in the pattern shop, which you had to reach by crossing the girder shop and the heavy machine shop and so up a staircase leading over the booming and murky smithy—between us and the boss in his great skylighted office, surrounded by telephones and rushing out at us sometimes in his shirt sleeves, there was not so much difference as you might imagine. Because, while there was nothing democratic in our relations, supposing that word to have any meaning at all, which I doubt, we knew all about him. It was true he had inherited the business of millwrights and engineers, or would do so when his remarkable old father gave up the ghost. But he was in the line of succession. The old man, the Senior, we called him, to distinguish him from the Junior, had inherited the concern from his father, who had served his apprenticeship with the man who invented the steam engine, Jamie Watt, no less, with his partner Boulton. So here you had what, to us, was almost apostolic succession, and more than that there had been some sort of iron-works and foundry there in that part of Clerkenwell for goodness knows how long, with a yard behind which had been used in the Great Plague to bury the poor folk in, as we found, very horribly, when we dug the big erecting pit deeper for a tall mill engine, and found skulls and so on. And the tavern at the corner is still called the Pit's Head, and in my time their ale

was good enough. And never did I hear from the men any complaint that Junior should inherit from Senior, seeing their fathers before them had builded the business and gave us, anyhow, a decent living. Even in my time, and that followed a strike that was like a lot of brothers fighting, the men were tradesmen, which is to say, men cunning and skillful in their trade, and none more proud and considering than the pattern-makers. Which made us notice how the Junior, though he had more book knowledge than his father or grandfather, depended on the foreman to say just how a pattern would draw and how it could be cored. I can remember once, when I asked him, he was stuck and could not tell me.

The pattern-makers, then, with their own union, and looking down on the carpenters and, in fact, everybody except the molders, were toffs in the mechanics' world. It was an interesting place to be. I've heard men say to me that it was the best fitted-up shop, for a journeyman, of any in London, and they had worked in them all, from Hunter and English at Bow, who made pumping engines, the same as we, to Gwynnes of Hammer-smith and Peter Brotherhood's, who were more in the marine line and had a host of tricky castings to do. We had a band saw, a circular saw, a planing machine, and two lathes, one for big face work, and a small one, which I delighted to run, for prints and so on. For you must understand I did not go into that place an ignoramus, as do so many apprentices, so that their whole four years is none too much to get

From: *Swallowing the Anchor*, by William McFee, copyright, 1921, 1925, reprinted by permission of Doubleday and Company, Inc.



## *How Writing Is Written*

the rudiments. I had always had tools in my hands, and had a lathe with a treadle at home and could use a gouge and knife tool pretty well, so when I got to that lathe up in the corner of the pattern shop, driven by a belt from the great humming engine downstairs, I was loath to leave off. Even now, I could use a lathe all day.

But the journeymen, who had learned their trade before all these fine machines had been invented, did not believe in having apprentices use them. I can remember, when they put in a machine for slicing the end grain of a piece of wood true and square and as smooth as cheese, old Thompson, the foreman, would not let me to it. I had to go back to my bench and plane my work square and test it by hand. This was sound doctrine, though I didn't see it. For how can a craftsman learn to have his hand and eye and brain all trained to work together if he depend more and more on the machine? And to show how they made us apprentices work until we knew what we were doing, I can tell the way I made my tool chest.

There was another mark of distinction the pattern-makers had—the great number of tools each man had to buy. There was his big trying plane, a couple of jack planes, and as many as a half-a-dozen small smooth planes, some of which he had made himself out of a piece of beech he fancied, and bought the irons in Petticoat Lane of a Sunday morning. There were his hammers, two at least, and his gouges, which were sometimes wonderful pieces of fancy work, in ebony or rose-wood, though this latter stuff, pretty to look at, had a way of splitting. He had compasses, of course, and prickers, for no pattern-maker can work to a pencil line, he has to scribe it with a sharp blade. But above all he took pride in his chisels and

gouges, all oiled and sharpened and with boxwood hafts shining like cloudy amber, a lovely sight in a well-stocked chest. His saws were perhaps three in number and as a rule he would lend neither saw nor chisel nor gouge. Find your own. And indeed I have seen three men in a row at the long bench by the windows and their chests were worth all of twenty pounds each, which was a lot of money in those days when one made only tenpence or a shilling an hour.

Well, the first thing we apprentices had to do was make a chest. If we couldn't do that, seeing it was only joinery, we couldn't be trusted to make patterns. So up we went to the loft with our bench mate and picked the wood, eleven-inch boards of fair white pine about five-eighths of an inch thick. A chest had to go under a bench, it had to be long enough to carry a rip saw in the lid, and it had to be handy enough to lift to the man's shoulder when he went away to another town. This brought the chest to about three feet long by a foot wide and the same high. Inside, the tools lay in trays, such as I am going to tell about, like spoons and forks in these modern silver cabinets, and there was a lock or two and handles at each end, of brass. I can tell you, when you had made that chest and knew how to use all the tools it held, from the spoon gouges to the old woman's tooth, you could call yourself an improver, anyhow, and the old fellows in the shop would no longer worry you with their chat.

The box and the lid were all made in one, and then the lid was sawn asunder about three inches down between the dovetails. It was the dovetailing that tried the youngster, and even now I think of the failures, the "wasters" I made before I got the sides and ends good enough for old

Thompson. Nothing but right would do him, and he pushed the crooked work through the band saw so fast it screamed, and I had to begin again. For if you will look at a box or drawer that has been dovetailed you will see how nice the fitting must be. You have to saw with extreme care down the sides of the tails, leaving a shade to pare with a chisel, and when all of that particular corner is ready for a trial, set the male and female lightly together. I have seen men, working on the heavy mahogany cases that cover the malt rollers in a brewery, so skilled in dovetailing that the work drove together at the first shot, but they were master-joiners and doing such work year in, year out. For me, I was lucky, getting my four boards together at last, all ready for gluing and nailing.

Even this was a craft, for glue ill-made is no use at all, but a mere filling. We had a steam-heated pot outside on the landing, and they taught me to leave the glue in cold water overnight and then, when it was like large pale slabs of jelly, to set it warming gradually, stirring it now and then as I was told. When all was ready the bench was cleared and the pot brought in. All the tails were glued quickly and tapped into place, the excess was wiped off with shavings, the pot put back, and then the nails put in. This nailing was so done that each nail added to the rigidity of the chest, they being driven in pairs away from each other and headed home with a punch. Then the top and bottom, each a clean and beautiful single piece of fine pine, were nailed on and the whole thing put up in the loft to dry.

The custom in my time was to leave it there while you made your trays. And if any apprentice had trouble with his chest, he could count on a miserable time with

trays. These were generally three in number. One, the same size as the chest, went below. The other two lay end to end, flush with the opening, and were to carry the fancy chisels, bradawls, drill bits, and gouges. The trouble and care arose from their being only three-eighths of an inch thick, or sometimes only a quarter of an inch, and since they were shellac-varnished, every flaw was visible. I think I made a good half-dozen top trays before old Thompson managed to bring himself to let me go on with the work. I hated him and his particularity then, but I wish, when I have some woodwork to do now, that I could find someone with one-tenth of his skill and honorable professional conscience. When the trays were made, then, and ready to be planed down to fit the chest exactly, the chest itself was a hard, strong, hollow affair that, as old Thompson said, "could be chucked out o' two-story window an' take no 'arm." This was the ideal we were supposed to work for, and cases have been known in the trade where a chest, locked and screwed, has actually had this misfortune and survived with only a bruised or splintered corner.

Taking it up again, then, the next thing to do was to put on the top and bottom moldings, which formed additional sturdiness and also made the thing near watertight. The lid being sawn through, the inside was cleaned up and the hinges fitted. Some men had four hinges on their chests, long ones, after the manner of a piano lid, and often you would see two or three locks. Both hinges and locks took skill, for if you cut too much you could not replace it, and a badly fitting lock or hinge was a mark to carry with you all your days. Then came the trays, and they had to be shaved so that when you dropped them into place they floated softly down

on the imprisoned air, and old Thompson would mumble, "Not so dusty," and turn his ponderous body toward his own bench. I can see him now, reddish mutton chops and bristling mustache, standing with one hand on his trying plane, his spectacles on the end of his nose and he looking over them, as I exhibited my handiwork. He was an authentic part of England.

Things went easier for the apprentice once he had his box hinged and locked. It was now to be painted, and it was interesting to do. Inside, a dozen coats of shellac varnish, very thin, made a fine dry bed for tools. Outside, for some reason or other, black was universal. Lampblack and shellac varnish were applied as often as twenty times, and finally varnish alone, until the thing had a glossy, satiny feel of a piano. This was not only for decoration, for well-covered wood is stronger and takes a dint better than the naked timber. And then came the joy of putting on the handles, which had to be of heavy brass, and if he had a friend in the machine shop, it was considered good form to get the castings rough from the foundry and have them finished close at hand.

There was a general feeling among the pattern-makers that they, the molders and the smiths, were superior to the other tradesmen, whose combined efforts built an engine, because, in a manner of speaking, "they had nothing but the drawing to work to." A fitter, a turner, a machinist—for in England they are so infernally logical that a machinist is a man who operates a machine—all had a forging, a casting, or some sort of stock from which to work. But a pattern-maker or a molder when "striking out" large molds that had no patterns, had to "read the drawing" and in no small degree was a draftsman

himself. It was for this reason that apprentices like myself, who were destined to become professional engineers rather than journeymen mechanics, began with pattern-making. Moreover, it was a remarkably clean occupation and we had fastidious craftsmen in the shop. I have seen a man whose name was Harry, a tall middle-aged person from the north of England and wonderfully skilled at large built-up "plate" patterns, who would dart behind the band saw half-a-dozen times in a morning to wash his hands in a bucket of warm water he had there and dry them in the rich yellow sawdust before rubbing olive oil over them and wiping them again, to make them what he called "soople." And a bench mate I had for a while, a chunky little sportsman named Jack, invariably wore a nice derby hat all day and had a fresh starched white shirt with wide cuffs that I never saw turned down, every day of his life. Here was a striking example of that peculiar individual liberty that can be found nowhere else save in England. None of his mates queried Jack's right to do this if he could afford it, and his wife liked to get the shirts up for him, yet none of them would have dreamed of imitating him. That is what I call liberty.

It is necessary here to explain more clearly why a pattern-maker's work is so important, and the manner in which it differs from joinery and even cabinet-making. A pattern, then, is the wooden model which goes to the foundry to form the hole in the sand into which the metal is poured. Now it will be perfectly obvious that the pattern must be of sufficient size to leave metal enough for machining, it must be made so that it will not warp with damp, and above all it must be so designed that it will come out of the mold,

## The Pattern-Makers

or "draw," after the latter is made. Here comes the craft of the trade. The pattern-maker must decide, by an attentive consideration of the tracing sent to him from the office, how that casting should come out. And if he has decided, then he must make the pattern with a taper downward. If there is a rib or boss in the way, then that part must be made with screws that can be reached through the sand and so released; and then, when the main body of the pattern has been drawn out, these extensions can be picked out with clever fingers and the mold set aside for black-washing with plumbago and making ready for pouring.

Now there is another thing that must be made clear, and that is the way a pattern-maker lays out his work. You would notice at once that he uses a rule different from the fourfold, three-foot thing that joiners and carpenters fancy. The pattern-maker's rule is of box, of course, since no other wood has the same nature and fitness, but it is straight and two inches wide by two feet long. And if you take it up and examine it you will find every edge is scaled in a different way. The pattern-maker, indeed, has not one inch but four. He has the standard inch for comparison, he has a cast-iron inch, a brass inch, and one for cast steel. And the reason is this—that if a thing is to be of cast iron, let us say, the pattern for it must be made so much larger because cast iron contracts in cooling about a quarter of an inch in two feet. So he calls his rule a contraction rule, and the young apprentice soon learns to scan the scale before he uses it, remembering from what metal, iron or bronze, the casting will be made.

Now this was an education, because it brought out what was in you, and left you free from theories, which are the

habit-forming drugs of the colleges and not good for the young. You could see, if you were wide awake, that the boss in his office might need those fine explanations with long words; but the clever journeyman had very little book learning, and his skill at his trade was something else—his brain and his hand and his eye all worked together. And sometimes I think it would be better if a man learned his trade before he learned to read and write. He would pay more attention to the feel of things under his hand, and his eye would see shapes instead of lines and—a long word—superficies.

I have said this shop where I worked was a millwright's shop. This is a very ancient trade and much of it in my time was gearing. I speak of a time before electricity was much thought of. In the pattern shop and drawing office it is true we had electric lights, but danger from fires was great and electric motors gave trouble. They could not be depended on like a steam engine and shaft-driving leather belts. England in those days was a country of leather belts. The men wore them, great broad plastrons to hold their girth together. They wore leather suspenders, and all harness was leather. And every machine was driven by a leather belt. I can remember the first motor cars and can hear now the *click-slap click-slap* of the belt on the cone pulleys under the seat. We are held together by leather belts, and the familiar threat to a youngster who was cheeky was "a good belting" or perhaps "a good hiding" which carried with it the idea of leather and was sometimes changed to "tanning your hide for you." This was part of the education, and a very useful one, too, because it was founded upon tradition. When old Thompson looked for respect from me and the other

apprentices he was not thinking so much of himself as of his position as a master mechanic, as the foreman, as the father of young Thompson who was at the next bench to me and another young Thompson in the brass-finishers' shop downstairs. And I maintain that a respect for authority is an essential part of education of the young, even if you have to tan their hides to make them understand it. If there is nothing in achievement and climbing to the top of your trade or profession, and you deserve no respect when you get there, then children may as well be taught to be bandits and hold-up men at the beginning. The men whom I remember with most affection today are those who understood authority and made me understand it too. Liberty is a very fine thing indeed, but a love of liberty can very easily become a love of laziness, and out of this union will be born impudence, which is the dry rot of character.

Of millwright's work, then, we had a plenty, and the best and finest work of all was the making of mortise teeth on the great cog wheels which were used for the transmission of power. Everybody now is familiar with gears grinding and making a noise; imagine, then, the terrific clamor wheels ten or fifteen feet in diameter would have made had they been entirely of iron. So one wheel of each pair was provided with teeth of wood, and the making of these teeth, the fitting of them into their sockets and the shaping of them to mesh truly with their mates, was a craft, almost I said an art, since the doing of it afforded a deep pleasure to the artisan and was a part of human life and effort. Moreover, some men were "dabs" at it, as we used to say, while others never got the trick of it.

Hornbeam was the timber used and it came in great boards three inches thick and a couple of feet wide, of a dirty yellowish gray texture, and very heavy. When the wheel came in from the turnery and was mounted on a temporary mandrel, old Thompson would bend his body over the drawing and do some rough figuring on a smooth piece of pine.

The first thing to do was to find out how many teeth there were and the overall sizes. Then the jig was got out and made over to suit that size of tooth. A jig was a rough box so made that you could fit your block of hornbeam into it and by turning it different ways over the circular saw, cut to the shape you required. Once the jig was set you could produce as many teeth as you wished. The contrivance looked rude and clumsy, but it contained in itself the whole principle of repetition work and quantity production. The difference was we used no long words. We called it a jig.

This, however, was only the beginning of the story. When you had your teeth with their roots rough-sawn, each one had to be fitted with plane and chisel into a particular hole. So you numbered the holes and the teeth and made a separate job of each. This fitting was a craft in itself, because there must be neither shake nor bind in it. If there was any shake your tooth would be out in a week. If you had the tenon too tight, flogging home a block of hornbeam could split your iron wheel rim and make a waster of the whole job. So each tooth was done canily and tapped in a little way while you went on to the next. No shake and no bind. "Cogs in a wheel" are looked down upon these days as of no account, but I can tell you it is fine work and good fitting

to have them all the same, without shake or bind. Once well in you can begin to ease them with oil. You dip each point, well-chamfered, into a can of linseed oil and tap it a little harder. The oil keeps the fibers from splitting, and by the time you are ready to flog all home, the tenons are yellow and polished like old ivory. Hornbeam is a beautiful wood, white like new ivory when planed, and as hard. It is a proud moment for a wheelwright when he has all set to batter his teeth down until the hammer rebounds from the wood hard up against the iron; and perhaps the boss stops, on his way to the pattern loft, to admire the half-finished wheel, the rough, unshapen blocks of hornbeam standing up from the iron rim and the roots peeping from the inner side as regular as can be, all ready for the pinning. It is like a story, if you like, each block a chapter, and ended with a hammer blow.

Now comes the pinning. Close up under the rim the workman bores a quarter-inch hole long-ways through the root of the tooth, and the smith sends up a basket of pins, iron rods about six inches long and a tight fit to the holes. These pins are used only in case the timber dries up in a hot place, however, and loosens a cog by accident. It is soon done, and now comes the real craft of all, the fine and finicky work of shaping the teeth so that the wheel will gear with its mate.

Now, I know well enough that the curves of a wheel tooth are determined nowadays by theory, and I could give you that theory if it would be of any help to you, with many long words like *epicycloid*, and *involute*, and so on. I could explain what we mean by the Rolling Circle and how it traces out the shape of the tooth in its path round the imaginary Pitch

Circle. All very scientific. But what I want you to notice is this: that these fine explanations, like a professor's analysis of a story or a novel, come after the thing has been done. The wheelwright made his template and cut his wheel teeth to it for generations before the theory got into a book. He got it from his mates in the shop. This is not to say he had no hand in it himself, any more than a navigator should be thought to need nothing of his own because he uses the charts some dead naval officer made before he was born. The artisan makes his template and marks off his wheel according to rule of thumb, but he guides his gouge and chisel as he pares the flanks of the cogs by experience, and something else which you can call knack, or intuition, if you like. You might even call it inspiration since it comes from his knowing in his mind what the teeth have to do. He sees in his subconscious mind the imaginary rolling circle of the two revolving and engaging wheels very much as a man writing a story sees the end and so on before he has got more than the beginning of it down in words. For a story is like a wheel, I should say, made up of pieces shaped and fitted, without shake or bind.

Here is a picture, then, that can be seen no longer, since electricity has made it useless, of old Thompson making a wheel, seated on a trestle close up against it, his big portly person surrounded by white slivers and shavings as the long sharp chisel scuffed and scalloped at the clean white hornbeam teeth, paring down to the scratched lines on the ends. Day after day would he sit there, working at flank after flank, till all were done, three, four, or even five score of them on a big wheel. That was good work and it was an edu-

cation to watch him and the men around him. It was something like the old-time guild where all the craftsmen were members of a brotherhood and their knowledge and chance to become skilled were common to all. What a man did with them after was nobody's affair.

Perhaps what I have said about crafts and craftsmen is not yet clear in its intention, and I must go back again to the picture of all those men and apprentices with an improver or two, working in that pattern shop over the smithy. For I would not have you see it in your mind as a factory where the operatives stood over machines for ten hours every day and were forbidden to speak or "take a spell." Men need as much play as boys and have as much right to it. And the social life of that shop was a thing to remember, being a tiny democracy of artisans. Their lives were open to each other, yet sacred. Their houses were castles and an invisible dragon of decent consideration defended them. They had humor and wit, too, and the immortal spirit of Mr. Samuel Weller hovered benignly over them. The day was a ritual of labor and relaxation, and there was nothing in life more wonderful than the sudden change when the ancient sweeper, peering Puck-like through the murky windows of the shop and seeing the form of old Thompson safely across the girder shop, would call out, like some sergeant major, "Lay on 'em, me lads!"

Then would planes and chisels be dropped, tool chests dragged from beneath the benches, and a joyous spell ensue for a few minutes. There would be wrestling between youngsters catch-as-catch-can style, young Thompson, a red-headed giant, acting as referee. Excitement would grow; one of us would be down under a bench, his mouth and nose buried in shav-

ings, trying desperately to keep his shoulders from touching the floor, when the old sweeper would put his hand to his ear and cry aloud, "Up guards and at 'em!"

And tool chests would disappear in a flurry, planes would be gripped, and when old Thompson came puffing through the door all hands would be hard at it.

On Saturdays, at noon, it was the custom, dating from very early days, to give over the hour to cleaning up. But we, who disbanded for the week-end at one o'clock, would do our tidying in a very short time and then we would go into the great clear template room, on whose blackened floor the girders and cantilevers were marked out in chalk, and we would have a match of wrestling on horseback. That is to say, we apprentices, who were young and light, would mount on the backs of the younger journeymen, like young Thompson, and we would ride at one another and strive to pull one another down. I reckon this good sport, as who will not who has tried it? It brought out all the generalship of which a man was capable, it exercised all the muscles lying flaccid during a day at the bench, and it inculcated a *camaraderie* that made for sound understanding of the workman's mind.

Sometimes, too, we boxed, and I know nothing more stimulating for a youth who imagines he is superior in mind or in birth, than a couple of rounds with a lithe and trained young Cockney from Hoxton or Camberwell who will bang his royal highness on the jaw and send him to the floor with a pretty right hook to the stomach.

But again, lest you should become suspicious that we who worked in that pattern shop were no more than skylarking loafers—in which case I would scarcely

remember those days with pleasure and delight—there were talk and, if you will believe it, literary allusions. It was there, indeed, I began to understand how great a man was Charles Dickens, seeing he had gotten a strangle hold of the heart-strings of the common people. There, too, I learned what the music hall could be, and many were the nights I would go down to the old Paragon in the Mile End Road and lie back helpless and aching with laughter at the exquisite mimicry of the artists of those days. For all their art was a taking-off of the joys and sorrows of working-class life. There was Marie Lloyd—what an artist, for all her vulgarity, that bright, fat lady could be! There was George Robey, prince of his line, who could come on dressed as anything, from Prehistoric Man to King Charles the Second, and keep the audience in a vortex of hiccupping, heart-stopping laughter. There was Phil Ray, shrewd satirist of snobbery and a lynx-eyed wonder for catching his cue from words or expressions in his audience. There was Wilkie Bard with his almost mystical hold upon the emotions of his turbulent admirers.

And these nights were reflected in the days, and the humors of Dickens would blossom into comical asides from young Thompson, who knew *Pickwick* by heart and could have passed a creditable examination in all the works. There was much singing at the benches, and each man had his avowed favorite songs. An expected courtesy was that you joined in the choruses. And behind all this was the social instinct overpassing the boundaries of birth and breeding, demanding that you fit into your place in the world, like a cog in a wheel, without shake or bind.

For artisan or artist, this was a training

the best possible, since this world of the pattern-makers, above the boom of the blowers, and the clang of plates and beams being fashioned into bridges, and the skeletons of giant buildings, was a model of the world in which the artist must eventually find his level. Here he found the rudiments of his calling, character and discipline: character in the making and divested of the difficult problems of sex. Here he could see exactly how men, as well as machines, worked. He saw clearly the elements of design, how one part must ever bear a strict relation to others and to the whole, and how no pretty-pretty business about love could be a substitute for a knowledge of the characters of men. For an apprenticeship to a trade is nothing less than a true beginning of life and a training for it, and out of that will grow, if a man have any aptitude for letters, a desire to write.

All this, you must observe, is indirect and apparently without purpose, yet from the beginning of this essay my intention has been to show how best an artist may be made, which is by artisanship and knowing a trade and its tradesmen well. There is a notion very much liked today that an artist, and especially a writer, must be coddled when young, and "encouraged," or his ambition will die away. That is one error; and the other is, that to learn his trade a writer should be fed with theories as to "structure," and that he should learn of men's natures from books. To these contentions I cannot agree. I would rather argue that the writings of the young should be allowed to die of exposure and ridicule, as were my own for a number of years, and their spirits indurated by the cold winds of contempt. The encouragement a young writer wants is mainly the inspiration of masterpieces,



## *How Writing Is Written*

and when he learns a trade he can be forever bringing those masterpieces to the touchstone of reality. Better than any rumble-bumble of philosophy and theory is the ring of steel on an anvil, the clean finish of a finely made pattern. The pattern is a symbol of what he is to do in the future. For what a man writes is no more than a pattern fashioned in the workshop of his soul, and goes out thence to be cast and cunningly fashioned for the public eye. He must allow for shrinkage

and the passage of time. He must make it so all parts fit truly yet will draw from the mold with ease and smoothness. Above all, he must take heed never to use words that have no meaning, any more than he would put fillets and beadings on a pattern no workman in the foundry could understand, and he will use clean, dry scantling, keeping his tools very sharp, so that part fits into part as I have shown, and his work will hold together, year after year, without shake or bind.

## Preface to NIGGER OF THE NARCISSUS

by JOSEPH CONRAD

A WORK that aspires, however humbly, to the condition of art should carry its justification in every line. And art itself may be defined as a single-minded attempt to render the highest kind of justice to the visible universe, by bringing to light the truth, manifold and one, underlying its every aspect. It is an attempt to find in its forms, in its colors, in its light, in its shadows, in the aspects of matter and in the facts of life what of each is fundamental, what is enduring and essential—their one illuminating and convincing quality—the very truth of their existence. The artist, then, like the thinker or the scientist, seeks the truth and makes his appeal. Impressed by the aspect of the world the thinker plunges into ideas, the scientist into facts—whence, presently, emerging they make their appeal to those qualities of our being that fit us best for the hazardous enterprise of living. They speak authoritatively to our common-sense, to our intelligence, to our desire of peace or to our desire of unrest; not seldom to our

prejudices, sometimes to our fears, often to our egoism—but always to our credulity. And their words are heard with reverence, for their concern is with weighty matters: with the cultivation of our minds and the proper care of our bodies, with the attainment of our ambitions, with the perfection of the means and the glorification of our precious aims.

It is otherwise with the artist.

Confronted by the same enigmatical spectacle the artist descends within himself, and in that lonely region of stress and strife, if he be deserving and fortunate, he finds the terms of his appeal. His appeal is made to our less obvious capacities: to that part of our nature which, because of the warlike conditions of existence, is necessarily kept out of sight within the more resisting and hard qualities—like the vulnerable body within a steel armor. His appeal is less loud, more profound, less distinct, more stirring—and sooner forgotten. Yet its effect endures forever. The changing wisdom of successive generations

From: *Nigger of the Narcissus*, by Joseph Conrad, copyright 1914 by Doubleday and Company, Inc.

## *Nigger of the Narcissus*

discards ideas, questions facts, demolishes theories. But the artist appeals to that part of our being which is not dependent on wisdom; to that in us which is a gift and not an acquisition—and, therefore, more permanently enduring. He speaks to our capacity for delight and wonder, to the sense of mystery surrounding our lives; to our sense of pity, and beauty, and pain; to the latent feeling of fellowship with all creation—and to the subtle but invincible conviction of solidarity that knits together the loneliness of innumerable hearts, to the solidarity in dreams, in joy, in sorrow, in aspirations, in illusions, in hope, in fear, which binds men to each other, which binds together all humanity—the dead to the living and the living to the unborn.

It is only some such train of thought, or rather of feeling, that can in a measure explain the aim of the attempt, made in the tale which follows, to present an unrestful episode in the obscure lives of a few individuals out of all the disregarded multitude of the bewildered, the simple and the voiceless. For, if any part of truth dwells in the belief confessed above, it becomes evident that there is not a place of splendor or a dark corner of the earth that does not deserve, if only a passing glance of wonder and pity. The motive then, may be held to justify the matter of the work; but this preface, which is simply an avowal of endeavor, cannot end here—for the avowal is not yet complete.

Fiction—if it at all aspires to be art—appeals to temperament. And in truth it must be, like painting, like music, like all art, the appeal of one temperament to all the other innumerable temperaments whose subtle and resistless power endows passing events with their true meaning, and creates the moral, the emotional atmosphere of the place and time. Such an

appeal to be effective must be an impression conveyed through the senses; and, in fact, it cannot be made in any other way, because temperament, whether individual or collective, is not amenable to persuasion. All art, therefore, appeals primarily to the senses, and the artistic aim when expressing itself in written words must also make its appeal through the senses, if its high desire is to reach the secret spring of responsive emotions. It must strenuously aspire to the plasticity of sculpture, to the color of painting, and to the magic suggestiveness of music—which is the art of arts. And it is only through complete, unswerving devotion to the perfect blending of form and substance; it is only through an unremitting never-discouraged care for the shape and ring of sentences that an approach can be made to plasticity, to color, and that the light of magic suggestiveness may be brought to play for an evanescent instant over the commonplace surface of words: of the old, old words, worn thin, defaced by ages of careless usage.

The sincere endeavor to accomplish that creative task, to go as far on that road as his strength will carry him, to go undeterred by faltering, weariness or reproach, is the only valid justification for the worker in prose. And if his conscience is clear, his answer to those who in the fullness of a wisdom which looks for immediate profit, demand specifically to be edified, consoled, amused; who demand to be promptly improved, or encouraged, or frightened, or shocked, or charmed, must run thus:—My task which I am trying to achieve is, by the power of the written word to make you hear, to make you feel—it is, before all, to make you *see*. That—and no more, and it is everything. If I succeed, you shall find there according

## *How Writing Is Written*

to your deserts: encouragement, consolation, fear, charm—all you demand—and, perhaps, also that glimpse of truth for which you have forgotten to ask.

To snatch in a moment of courage, from the remorseless rush of time, a passing phase of life, is only the beginning of the task. The task approached in tenderness and faith is to hold up unquestioningly, without choice and without fear, the rescued fragment before all eyes in the light of a sincere mood. It is to show its vibration, its color, its form; and through its movement, its form, and its color, reveal the substance of its truth—disclose its inspiring secret: the stress and passion within the core of each convincing moment. In a single-minded attempt of that kind, if one be deserving and fortunate, one may perchance attain to such clearness of sincerity that at last the presented vision of regret or pity, of terror or birth, shall awaken in the hearts of the beholders that feeling of unavoidable solidarity; of the solidarity in mysterious origin, in toil, in joy, in hope, in uncertain fate, which binds men to each other and all mankind to the visible world.

It is evident that he who, rightly or wrongly, holds by the convictions expressed above cannot be faithful to any one of the temporary formulas of his craft. The enduring part of them—the truth which each only imperfectly veils—should abide with him as the most precious of his possessions, but they all: Realism, Romanticism, Naturalism, even the unofficial sentimentalism (which like the poor, is exceedingly difficult to get rid of), all these gods must, after a short period of fellowship, abandon him—even on the very threshold of the temple—to the stammerings of his conscience and to the outspoken consciousness of the difficulties of his work. In that uneasy solitude the su-

preme cry of Art for Art itself, loses the exciting ring of its apparent immorality. It sounds far off. It has ceased to be a cry, and is heard only as a whisper, often incomprehensible, but at times and faintly encouraging.

Sometimes, stretched at ease in the shade of a roadside tree, we watch the motions of a laborer in a distant field, and after a time, begin to wonder languidly as to what the fellow may be at. We watch the movements of his body, the waving of his arms, we see him bend down, stand up, hesitate, begin again. It may add to the charm of an idle hour to be told the purpose of his exertions. If we know he is trying to lift a stone, to dig a ditch, to uproot a stump, we look with a more real interest at his efforts; we are disposed to condone the jar of his agitation upon the restfulness of the landscape; and even, if in a brotherly frame of mind, we may bring ourselves to forgive his failure. We understood his object, and, after all, the fellow has tried, and perhaps he had not the strength—and perhaps he had not the knowledge. We forgive, go on our way—and forget.

And so it is with the workman of art. Art is long and life is short, and success is very far off. And thus, doubtful of strength to travel so far, we talk a little about the aim—the aim of art, which, like life itself, is inspiring, difficult—obscured by mists. It is not in the clear logic of a triumphant conclusion; it is not in the unveiling of one of those heartless secrets which are called the Laws of Nature. It is not less great, but only more difficult.

To arrest, for the space of a breath, the hands busy about the work of the earth, and compel men entranced by the sight of distant goals to glance for a moment at the surrounding vision of form and

## Literature as Equipment for Living

color, of sunshine and shadows; to make them pause for a look, for a sigh, for a smile—such is the aim, difficult and evanescent, and reserved only for a few to achieve. But sometimes, by the deserving

and the fortunate, even that task is accomplished. And when it is accomplished—behold!—all the truth of life is there: a moment of vision, a sigh, a smile—and the return to an eternal rest.

## LITERATURE AS EQUIPMENT FOR LIVING

by KENNETH BURKE

HERE I shall put down as briefly as possible a statement in behalf of what might be catalogued, with a fair degree of accuracy, as a *sociological* criticism of literature. Sociological criticism in itself is certainly not new. I shall here try to suggest what partially new elements or emphasis I think should be added to this old approach. And to make the "way in" as easy as possible, I shall begin with a discussion of proverbs.

### I

Examine random specimens in *The Oxford Dictionary of English Proverbs*. You will note, I think, that there is no "pure" literature here. Everything is "medicine." Proverbs are designed for consolation or vengeance, for admonition or exhortation, for foretelling.

Or they name typical, recurrent situations. That is, people find a certain social relationship recurring so frequently that they must "have a word for it." The Eskimos have special names for many different kinds of snow (fifteen, if I remember rightly) because variations in the quality of snow greatly affect their living. Hence, they must "size up" snow much more accurately than we do. And the same is true of social phenomena. Social structures give rise to "type" situations, subtle subdi-

visions of the relationships involved in competitive and co-operative acts. Many proverbs seek to chart, in more or less homey and picturesque ways, these "type" situations. I submit that such naming is done, not for the sheer glory of the thing, but because of its bearing upon human welfare. A different name for snow implies a different kind of hunt. Some names for snow imply that one should not hunt at all. And similarly, the names for typical, recurrent social situations are not developed out of "disinterested curiosity," but because the names imply a command (what to expect, what to look out for).

To illustrate with a few representative examples:

Proverbs designed for consolation: "The sun does not shine on both sides of the hedge at once." "Think of ease, but work on." "Little troubles the eye, but far less the soul." "The worst luck now, the better another time." "The wind in one's face makes one wise." "He that hath lands hath quarrels." "He knows how to carry the dead cock home." "He is not poor that hath little, but he that desireth much."

For vengeance: "At length the fox is brought to the furrier." "Shod in the cradle, barefoot in the stubble." "Sue a beggar and get a louse." "The higher the ape goes, the more he shows his tail." "The

From Kenneth Burke, *The Philosophy of Literary Form*, Louisiana State University Press.

## *How Writing Is Written*

moon does not heed the barking of dogs." "He measures another's corn by his own bushel." "He shuns the man who knows him well." "Fools tie knots and wise men loose them."

Proverbs that have to do with foretelling: (The most obvious are those to do with the weather.) "Sow peas and beans in the wane of the moon, Who soweth them sooner, he soweth too soon." "When the wind's in the north, the skillful fisher goes not forth." "When the sloe tree is as white as a sheet, sow your barley whether it be dry or wet." "When the sun sets bright and clear, An easterly wind you need not fear. When the sun sets in a bank, A westerly wind we shall not want."

In short: "Keep your weather eye open": be realistic about sizing up today's weather, because your accuracy has bearing upon tomorrow's weather. And forecast not only the meteorological weather, but also the social weather: "When the moon's in the full, then wit's in the wane." "Straws show which way the wind blows." "When the fish is caught, the net is laid aside." "Remove an old tree, and it will wither to death." "The wolf may lose his teeth, but never his nature." "He that bites on every weed must needs light on poison." "Whether the pitcher strikes the stone, or the stone the pitcher, it is bad for the pitcher." "Eagles catch no flies." "The more laws, the more offenders."

In this foretelling category we might also include the recipes for wise living, sometimes moral, sometimes technical: "First thrive, and then wive." "Think with the wise but talk with the vulgar." "When the fox preacheth, then beware your geese." "Venture a small fish to catch a great one." "Respect a man, he will do the more."

In the class of "typical, recurrent situations" we might put such proverbs and

proverbial expressions as: "Sweet appears sour when we pay." "The treason is loved but the traitor is hated." "The wine in the bottle does not quench thirst." "The sun is never the worse for shining on a dung-hill." "The lion kicked by an ass." "The lion's share." "To catch one napping." "To smell a rat." "To cool one's heels."

By all means, I do not wish to suggest that this is the only way in which the proverbs could be classified. For instance, I have listed in the "foretelling" group the proverb, "When the fox preacheth, then beware your geese." But it could obviously be "taken over" for vindictive purposes. Or consider a proverb like, "Virtue flies from the heart of a mercenary man." A poor man might obviously use it either to console himself for being poor (the implication being, "Because I am poor in money I am rich in virtue") or to strike at another (the implication being, "When he got money, what else could you expect of him but deterioration?"). In fact, we could even say that such symbolic vengeance would itself be an aspect of solace. And a proverb like "The sun is never the worse for shining on a dung-hill" (which I have listed under "typical recurrent situations") might as well be put in the vindictive category.

The point of issue is not to find categories that "place" the proverbs once and for all. What I want is categories that suggest their active nature. Here there is no "realism for its own sake." There is realism for promise, admonition, solace, vengeance, foretelling, instruction, charting, all for the direct bearing that such acts have upon matters of welfare.

2

Step two: Why not extend such analysis of proverbs to encompass the whole field of literature? Could the most com-

## *Literature as Equipment for Living*

plex and sophisticated works of art legitimately be considered somewhat as "proverbs writ large"? Such leads, if held admissible, should help us to discover important facts about literary organization (thus satisfying the requirements of technical criticism). And the kind of observation from this perspective should apply beyond literature to life in general (thus helping to take literature out of its separate bin and give it a place in a general "sociological" picture).

The point of view might be phrased in this way: Proverbs are *strategies* for dealing with *situations*. In so far as situations are typical and recurrent in a given social structure, people develop names for them and strategies for handling them. Another name for strategies might be *attitudes*.

People have often commented on the fact that there are contrary *proverbs*. But I believe that the above approach to proverbs suggests a necessary modification of that comment. The apparent contradictions depend upon differences in *attitude*, involving a correspondingly different choice of *strategy*. Consider, for instance, the *apparently* opposite pair: "Repentance comes too late" and "Never too late to mend." The first is admonitory. It says in effect: "You'd better look out, or you'll get yourself too far into this business." The second is consolatory, saying in effect: "Buck up, old man, you can still pull out of this."

Some critics have quarreled with me about my selection of the word "strategy" as the name for this process. I have asked them to suggest an alternative term, so far without profit. The only one I can think of is "method." But if "strategy" errs in suggesting to some people an overly *conscious* procedure, "method" errs in suggesting an overly *methodical* one. Anyhow, let's look at the documents:

*Concise Oxford Dictionary*: "Strategy: Movement of an army or armies in a campaign, art of so moving or disposing troops or ships as to impose upon the enemy the place and time and conditions for fighting preferred by oneself" (from a Greek word that refers to the leading of an army).

*New English Dictionary*: "Strategy: The art of projecting and directing the larger military movements and operations of a campaign."

André Cheron, *Traité Complet d'Echecs*: "*On entend par stratégie les manoeuvres qui ont pour but la sortie et le bon arrangement des pièces.*"

Looking at these definitions, I gain courage. For surely, the most highly alembicated and sophisticated work of art, arising in complex civilizations, could be considered as designed to organize and command the army of one's thoughts and images, and to so organize them that one "imposes upon the enemy the time and place and conditions for fighting preferred by oneself." One seeks to "direct the larger movements and operations" in one's campaign of living. One "maneuvers," and the maneuvering is an "art."

Are not the final results one's "strategy"? One tries, as far as possible, to develop a strategy whereby one "can't lose." One tries to change the rules of the game until they fit his own necessities. Does the artist encounter disaster? He will "make capital" of it. If one is a victim of competition, for instance, if one is elbowed out, if one is willy-nilly more jockeyed against than jockeying, one can by the solace and vengeance of art convert this very "liability" into an "asset." One tries to fight on his own terms, developing a strategy for imposing the proper "time, place, and conditions."

But one must also, to develop a full

strategy, be *realistic*. One must *size things up* properly. One cannot accurately know how things *will be*, what is promising and what is menacing, unless he accurately knows how things *are*. So the wise strategist will not be content with strategies of merely a self-gratifying sort. He will "keep his weather eye open." He will not too eagerly "read into" a scene an attitude that is irrelevant to it. He won't sit on the side of an active volcano and "see" it as a dormant plain.

Often, alas, he will. The great allurements in our present popular "inspirational literature," for instance, may be largely of this sort. It is a strategy for easy consolation. It "fills a need," since there is always a need for easy consolation—and in an era of confusion like our own the need is especially keen. So people are only too willing to "meet a man halfway" who will *play down* the realistic naming of our situation and *play up* such strategies as make solace cheap. However, I should propose a reservation here. We usually take it for granted that people who consume our current output of books on "How to Buy Friends and Bamboozle Oneself and Other People" are reading as *students* who will attempt applying the recipes given. Nothing of the sort. *The reading of a book on the attaining of success is in itself the symbolic attaining of that success.* It is *while they read* that these readers are "succeeding." I'll wager that, in by far the great majority of cases, such readers make no serious attempt to apply the book's recipes. The lure of the book resides in the fact that the reader, while reading it, is then living in the aura of success. What he wants is *easy* success; and he gets it in symbolic form by mere reading itself. To attempt applying such stuff in real life would be very difficult, full of many disillusioning difficulties.

Sometimes a different strategy may arise. The author may remain realistic, avoiding too easy a form of solace—yet he may get as far off the track in his own way. Forgetting that realism is an aspect for foretelling, he may take it as an end in itself. He is tempted to do this by two factors: (1) an *ill-digested* philosophy of science, leading him mistakenly to assume that "relentless" naturalistic "truthfulness" is a proper end in itself, and (2) a merely *competitive* desire to outstrip other writers by being "more realistic" than they. Works thus made "efficient" by tests of competition internal to the book trade are a kind of academicism not so named (the writer usually thinks of it as the *opposite* of academicism). Realism thus stepped up competitively might be distinguished from the proper sort by the name of "naturalism." As a way of "sizing things up," the naturalistic tradition tends to become as inaccurate as the "inspirational" strategy, though at the opposite extreme.

Anyhow, the main point is this: A work like *Madame Bovary* (or its homely American translation, *Babbitt*) is the strategic naming of a situation. It singles out a pattern of experience that is sufficiently representative of our social structure, that recurs sufficiently often *mutandis mutatis*, for people to "need a word for it" and to adopt an attitude towards it. Each work of art is the addition of a word to an informal dictionary (or, in the case of purely derivative artists, the addition of a subsidiary meaning to a word already given by some originating artist). As for *Madame Bovary*, the French critic Jules de Gaultier proposed to add it to our formal dictionary by coining the word "Bovarysme" and writing a whole book to say what he meant by it.

Mencken's book on *The American Language*, I hate to say, is splendid. I

## *Literature as Equipment for Living*

console myself with the reminder that Mencken didn't write it. Many millions of people wrote it, and Mencken was merely the amanuensis who took it down from their dictation. He found a true "vehicle" (that is, a book that could be greater than the author who wrote it). He gets the royalties, but the job was done by a collectivity. As you read that book, you see a people who were up against a new set of typical recurrent situations, situations typical of their business, their politics, their criminal organizations, their sports. Either there were no words for these in standard English, or people didn't know them, or they didn't "sound right." So a new vocabulary arose, to "give us a word for it." I see no reason for believing that Americans are unusually fertile in word-coinage. American slang was not developed out of some exceptional gift. It was developed out of the fact that new typical situations had arisen and people needed names for them. They had to "size things up." They had to console and strike, to promise and admonish. They had to describe for purposes of forecasting. And "slang" was the result. It is, by this analysis, simply *proverbs not so named*, a kind of "folk criticism."

### 3

With what, then, would "sociological criticism" along these lines be concerned? It would seek to codify the various strategies which artists have developed with relation to the naming of situation. In a sense, much of it would even be "timeless," for many of the "typical, recurrent situations" are not peculiar to our civilization at all. The situation and strategies framed in Aesop's Fables, for instance, apply to human relations now just as fully as they applied in ancient Greece. They are, like philosophy, sufficiently "generalized"

to extend far beyond the particular combination of events named by them in any one instance. They name an "essence." Or, as Korzybski might say, they are on a "high level of abstraction." One doesn't usually think of them as "abstract," since they are usually so concrete in their stylistic expression. But they invariably aim to discern the "general behind the particular" (which would suggest that they are good Goethe).

The attempt to treat literature from the standpoint of situations and strategies suggests a variant of Spengler's notion of the "contemporaneous." By "contemporaneity" he meant corresponding stages of different cultures. For instance, if modern New York is much like decadent Rome, then we are "contemporaneous" with decadent Rome, or with some corresponding decadent city among the Mayas, etc. It is in this sense that situations are "timeless," "non-historical," "contemporaneous." A given human relationship may be at one time named in terms of foxes and lions, if there are foxes and lions about; or it may now be named in terms of salesmanship, advertising, the tactics of politicians, etc. But beneath the change in particulars, we may often discern the naming of the one situation.

So sociological criticism, as here understood, would seek to assemble and codify this lore. It might occasionally lead us to outrage good taste, as we sometimes found exemplified in some great sermon or tragedy or abstruse work of philosophy the same strategy as we found exemplified in a dirty joke. At this point we'd put the sermon and the dirty joke together, thus "grouping by situation" and showing the range of possible particularizations. In his exceptionally discerning essay, "A Critic's Job of Work," R. P. Blackmur says, "I think on the whole his [Burke's] method



## How Writing Is Written

could be applied with equal fruitfulness to Shakespeare, Dashiell Hammett, or Miss Marie Corelli." When I got through wincing, I had to admit that Blackmur was right. This article is an attempt to say for the method what can be said. As a matter of fact, I'll go a step further and maintain: You can't properly put Marie Corelli and Shakespeare apart until you have first put them together. First genus, then differentia. The strategy in common is the genus. The *range* or *scale* or *spectrum* of particularizations is the differentia.

Anyhow, that's what I'm driving at. And that's why reviewers sometime find in my work "intuitive" leaps that are dubious as "science." They are not "leaps" at all. They are classifications, groupings, made on the basis of some strategic element common to the ideas grouped. They are neither more nor less "intuitive" than *any* grouping or classification of social events. Apples can be grouped with bananas as fruits, and they can be grouped with tennis balls as round. I am simply proposing, in the social sphere, a method of classification with reference to *strategies*.

The method has these things to be said in its favor: It gives definite insight into the organization of literary works; and it automatically breaks down the barriers erected about literature as a specialized pursuit. People can classify novels by reference to three kinds, eight kinds, seventeen kinds. It doesn't matter. Students patiently copy down the professor's classification and pass examinations on it, because the range of possible academic classifications is endless. Sociological classification, as herein suggested, would derive its relevance from the fact that it should apply both to works of art and to social situations outside of art.

It would, I admit, violate current pieties, break down current categories, and thereby "outrage good taste." But "good taste" has become *inert*. The classifications I am proposing would be *active*. I think that what we need is active categories.

These categories will lie on the bias across the categories of modern specialization. The new alignment will outrage in particular those persons who take the division of faculties in our universities to be an exact replica of the way God himself divided up the universe. We have had the Philosophy of the Being; and we have had the Philosophy of the Becoming. In contemporary specialization, we have been getting the Philosophy of the Bin. Each of these mental localities has had its own peculiar way of life, its own values, even its own special idiom for seeing, thinking, and "proving." Among other things, a sociological approach should attempt to provide a reintegrative point of view, a broader empire of investigation encompassing the lot.

What would such sociological categories be like? They would consider works of art, I think, as strategies for selecting enemies and allies, for socializing losses, for warding off evil eye, for purification, propitiation, and desanctification, consolation and vengeance, admonition and exhortation, implicit commands or instructions of one sort or another. Art forms like "tragedy" or "comedy" or "satire" would be treated as *equipments for living*, that size up situations in various ways and in keeping with correspondingly various attitudes. The typical ingredients of such forms would be sought. Their relation to typical situations would be stressed. Their comparative values would be considered, with the intention of formulating a "strategy of strategies," the "over-all" strategy obtained by inspection of the lot.

## HOW WRITING IS WRITTEN

by GERTRUDE STEIN

WHAT I WANT to talk about to you is just the general subject of how writing is written. The beginning of it is what everybody has to know: everybody is contemporary with his period. A very bad painter once said to a very great painter, 'Do what you like, you cannot get rid of the fact that we are contemporaries.' That is what goes on in writing. The whole crowd of you are contemporary to each other, and the whole business of writing is the question of living in the contemporariness. Each generation has to live in that. The thing that is important is that nobody knows what the contemporariness is. In other words, they don't know where they are going, but they are on their way.

Each generation has to do with what you would call the daily life: and a writer, painter, or any sort of creative artist, is not at all ahead of his time. He is contemporary. He can't live in the past, because it is gone. He can't live in the future, because no one knows what it is. He can live only in the present of his daily life. He is expressing the thing that is being expressed by everybody else in their daily lives. The thing you have to remember is that everybody lives a contemporary daily life. The writer lives it, too, and expresses it imperceptibly. The fact remains that in the act of living, everybody has to live contemporarily. But in the things concerning art and literature they don't have to live contemporarily, because it doesn't make any difference; and they live about forty years behind their time. And that is the real explanation of why the artist or painter is not recognized by his contemporaries. He is expressing

the time-sense of his contemporaries, but nobody is really interested. After the new generation has come, after the grandchildren, so to speak, then the opposition dies out: because after all there is then a new contemporary expression to oppose.

That is really the fact about contemporariness. As I see the whole crowd of you, if there are any of you who are going to express yourselves contemporarily, you will do something which most people won't want to look at. Most of you will be so busy living the contemporary life that it will be like the tired business man: in the things of the mind you will want the things you know. And too, if you don't live contemporarily, you are a nuisance. That is why we live contemporarily. If a man goes along the street with horse and carriage in New York in the snow, that man is a nuisance; and he knows it, so now he doesn't do it. He would not be living, or acting, contemporarily: he would only be in the way, a drag.

The world can accept me now because there is coming out of *your* generation somebody they won't like, and therefore they accept me because I am sufficiently past in having been contemporary so they don't have to dislike me. So thirty years from now I shall be accepted. And the same thing will happen again: that is the reason why every generation has the same thing happen. It will always be the same story, because there is always the same situation presented. The contemporary thing in art and literature is the thing which doesn't make enough difference to the people of that generation so that they can accept it or reject it.

Reprinted by permission of Random House, Inc.

## How Writing Is Written

Most of you know that in a funny kind of way you are nearer your grandparents than your parents. Since this contemporariness is always there, nobody realizes that you cannot follow it up. That is the reason people discover—those interested in the activities of other people—that they cannot understand their contemporaries. If you kids started in to write, I wouldn't be a good judge of you, because I am of the third generation. What you are going to do I don't know any more than anyone else. But I created a movement of which you are the grandchildren. The contemporary thing is the thing you can't get away from. That is the fundamental thing in all writing.

Another thing you have to remember is that each period of time not only has its contemporary quality, but it has a time-sense. Things move more quickly, slowly, or differently, from one generation to another. Take the Nineteenth Century. The Nineteenth Century was roughly the Englishman's Century. And their method, as they themselves, in their worst moments, speak of it, is that of 'muddling through.' They begin at one end and hope to come out at the other: their grammar, parts of speech, methods of talk, go with this fashion. The United States began a different phase when, after the Civil War, they discovered and created out of their inner need a different way of life. They created the Twentieth Century. The United States, instead of having the feeling of beginning at one end and ending at another, had the conception of assembling the whole thing out of its parts, the whole thing which made the Twentieth Century productive. The Twentieth Century conceived an automobile as a whole, so to speak, and then created it, built it up out of its parts. It was an entirely different point of view

from the Nineteenth Century's. The Nineteenth Century would have seen the parts, and worked towards the automobile through them.

Now in a funny sort of way this expresses, in different terms the difference between the literature of the Nineteenth Century and the literature of the Twentieth. Think of your reading. If you look at it from the days of Chaucer, you will see that what you might call the 'internal history' of a country always affects its use of writing. It makes a difference in the expression, in the vocabulary, even in the handling of grammar. In an amusing story in your *Literary Magazine*, when the author speaks of the fact that he is tired of using quotation marks and isn't going to use them any more, with him that is a joke; but when I began writing, the whole question of punctuation was a vital question. You see, I had this new conception: I had this conception of the whole paragraph, and in *The Making of Americans* I had this idea of a whole thing. But if you think of contemporary English writers, it doesn't work like that at all. They conceive of it as pieces put together to make a whole, and I conceived it as a whole made up of its parts. I didn't know what I was doing any more than you know, but in response to the need of my period I was doing this thing. That is why I came in contact with people who were unconsciously doing the same thing. They had the Twentieth Century conception of a whole. So the element of punctuation was very vital. The comma was just a nuisance. If you got the thing as a whole, the comma kept irritating you all along the line. If you think of a thing as a whole, and the comma keeps sticking out, it gets on your nerves; because, after all, it destroys the reality of the whole. So I got

## How Writing Is Written

rid more and more of commas. Not because I had any prejudice against commas; but the comma was a stumbling-block. When you were conceiving a sentence, the comma stopped you. That is the illustration of the question of grammar and parts of speech, as part of the daily life as we live it.

The other thing which I accomplished was the getting rid of nouns. In the Twentieth Century you feel like movement. The Nineteenth Century didn't feel that way. The element of movement was not the predominating thing that they felt. You know that in your lives movement is the thing that occupies you most—you feel movement all the time. And the United States had the first instance of what I call Twentieth Century writing. You see it first in Walt Whitman. He was the beginning of movement. He didn't see it very clearly, but there was a sense of movement that the European was much influenced by, because the Twentieth Century has become the American Century. That is what I mean when I say that each generation has its own literature.

There is a third element. You see, everybody in this generation has his sense of time which belongs to his crowd. But then, you always have the memory of what you were brought up with. In most people that makes a double time, which makes confusion. When one is beginning to write he is always under the shadow of the thing that is just past. And that is the reason why the creative person always has the appearance of ugliness. There is this persistent drag of the habits that belong to you. And in struggling away from this thing there is always an ugliness. That is the other reason why the contemporary writer is always refused. It is the effort of escaping from the thing which is a drag

upon you that is so strong that the result is an apparent ugliness; and the world always says of the new writer, 'It is so ugly!' And they are right, because it *is* ugly. If you disagree with your parents, there is an ugliness in the relation. There is a double resistance that makes the essence of this thing ugly.

You always have in your writing the resistance outside of you and inside of you, a shadow upon you, and the thing which you must express. In the beginning of your writing, this struggle is so tremendous that that result is ugly; and that is the reason why the followers are always accepted before the person who made the revolution. The person who has made the fight probably makes it seem ugly, although the struggle has the much greater beauty. But the followers die out; and the man who made the struggle and the quality of beauty remains in the intensity of the fight. Eventually it comes out all right, and so you have this very queer situation which always happens with the followers: the original person has to have in him a certain element of ugliness. You know that is what happens over and over again: the statement made that it is ugly—the statement made against me for the last twenty years. And they are quite right, because it *is* ugly. But the essence of that ugliness is the thing which will always make it beautiful. I myself think it is much more interesting when it seems ugly, because in it you see the element of the fight. The literature of one hundred years ago is perfectly easy to see, because the sediment of ugliness has settled down and you got the solemnity of its beauty. But to a person of my temperament, it is much more amusing when it has the vitality of the struggle.

In my own case, the Twentieth Century,

## How Writing Is Written

which America created after the Civil War, and which had certain elements, had a definite influence on me. And in *The Making of Americans*, which is a book I would like to talk about, I gradually and slowly found out that there were two things I had to think about; the fact that knowledge is acquired, so to speak, by memory; but that when you know anything, memory doesn't come in. At any moment that you are conscious of knowing anything, memory plays no part. When any of you feels anybody else, memory doesn't come into it. You have the sense of the immediate. Remember that my immediate forebears were people like Meredith, Thomas Hardy, and so forth, and you will see what a struggle it was to do this thing. This was one of my first efforts to give the appearance of one time-knowledge, and not to make it a narrative story. This is what I mean by immediacy of description: you will find it in *The Making of Americans*: 'It happens very often that a man has it in him, that a man does something, that he does very often that he does many things, when he is a young man when he is an old man, when he is an older man.' Do you see what I mean? And here is a description of a thing that is very interesting: 'One of such of these kind of them had a little boy and this one, the little son wanted to make a collection of butterflies and beetles and it was all exciting to him and it was all arranged then and then the father said to the son you are certain this is not a cruel thing that you are wanting to be doing, killing things to make collections of them, and the son was very disturbed then and they talked about it together the two of them and more and more they talked about it then and then at last the boy was convinced it was a cruel thing and he

said he would not do it and the father said the little boy was a noble boy to give up pleasure when it was a cruel one. The boy went to bed then and then the father when he got up in the early morning saw a wonderfully beautiful moth in the room and he caught him and he killed him and he pinned him and he woke up his son then and showed it to him and he said to him "see what a good father I am to have caught and killed this one," the boy was all mixed up inside him and then he said he would go on with his collecting and that was all there was then of discussing and this is a little description of something that happened once and it is very interesting.'

I was trying to get this present immediacy without trying to drag in anything else. I had to use present participles, new constructions of grammar. The grammar-constructions are correct, but they are changed, in order to get this immediacy. In short, from that time I have been trying in every possible way to get the sense of immediacy, and practically all the work I have done has been in that direction.

In *The Making of Americans* I had an idea that I could get a sense of immediacy if I made a description of every kind of human being that existed, the rules for resemblances and all the other things, until really I had made a description of every human being—I found this out when I was at Harvard working under William James.

Did you ever see that article that came out in *The Atlantic Monthly* a year or two ago, about my experiments with automatic writing? It was very amusing. The experiment that I did was to take a lot of people in moments of fatigue and rest and activity of various kinds, and see if they could do anything with automatic writing.

## How Writing Is Written

I found they could not do anything with automatic writing, but I found out a great deal about how people act. I found there a certain kind of human being who acted in a certain way, and another kind who acted in another kind of way, and their resemblances and their differences. And then I wanted to find out if you could make a history of the whole world, if you could know the whole life history of everyone in the world, their slight resemblances and lack of resemblances. I made enormous charts, and I tried to carry these charts out. You start in and you take everyone that you know, and then when you see anybody who has a certain expression or turn of the face that reminds you of some one, you find out where he agrees or disagrees with the character, until you build up the whole scheme. I got to the place where I didn't know whether I knew people or not. I made so many charts that when I used to go down the streets of Paris I wondered whether they were people I knew or ones I didn't. That is what *The Making of Americans* was intended to be. I was to make a description of every kind of human being until I could know by these variations how everybody was to be known. Then I got very much interested in this thing, and I wrote about nine hundred pages, and I came to a logical conclusion that this thing could be done. Anybody who has patience enough could literally and entirely make of the whole world a history of human nature. When I found it could be done, I lost interest in it. As soon as I found definitely and clearly and completely that I could do it, I stopped writing the long book. It didn't interest me any longer. In doing the thing, I found out this question of resemblances, and I found in making these analyses that the resemblances were not of memory. I

had to remember what person looked like the other person. Then I found this contradiction: that the resemblances were a matter of memory. There were two prime elements involved, the element of memory and the other of immediacy.

The element of memory was a perfectly feasible thing, so then I gave it up. I then started a book which I called *A Long Gay Book* to see if I could work the thing up to a faster tempo. I wanted to see if I could make that a more complete vision. I wanted to see if I could hold it in the frame. Ordinarily the novels of the Nineteenth Century live by association; they are wont to call up other pictures than the one they present to you. I didn't want, when I said 'water,' to have you think of running water. Therefore I began limiting my vocabulary, because I wanted to get rid of anything except the picture within the frame. While I was writing I didn't want, when I used one word, to make it carry with it too many associations. I wanted as far as possible to make it exact, as exact as mathematics; that is to say, for example, if one and one make two, I wanted to get words to have as much exactness as that. When I put them down they were to have this quality. The whole history of my work, from *The Making of Americans*, has been a history of that. I made a great many discoveries, but the thing that I was always trying to do was this thing.

One thing which came to me is that the Twentieth Century gives of itself a feeling of movement, and has in its way no feeling for events. To the Twentieth Century events are not important. You must know that. Events are not exciting. Events have lost their interest for people. You read them more like a soothing syrup, and if you listen over the radio you don't get

## How Writing Is Written

very excited. The thing has got to this place, that events are so wonderful that they are not exciting. Now you have to remember that the business of an artist is to be exciting. If the thing has its proper vitality, the result must be exciting. I was struck with it during the War: the average dough-boy standing on a street corner doing nothing—(they say, at the end of their doing nothing, 'I guess I'll go home')—was much more exciting to people than when the soldiers went over the top. The populace were passionately interested in their standing on the street corners, more so than in the St. Mihiel drive. And it is a perfectly natural thing. Events had got so continuous that the fact that events were taking place no longer stimulated anybody. To see three men, strangers, standing, expressed their personality to the European man so much more than anything else they could do. That thing impressed me very much. But the novel which tells about what happens is of no interest to anybody. It is quite characteristic that in *The Making of Americans*, Proust, *Ulysses*, nothing much happens. People are interested in existence. Newspapers excite people very little. Sometimes a personality breaks through the newspapers—Lindbergh, Dillinger,—when the personality has vitality. It wasn't what Dillinger *did* that excited anybody. The feeling is perfectly simple. You can see it in my *Four Saints*. Saints shouldn't do anything. The fact that a saint is there is enough for anybody. The *Four Saints* was written about as static as I could make it. The saints conversed a little, and it all did something. It did something more than the theater which has tried to make events has done. For our purposes, for our contemporary purposes, events have no im-

portance. I merely say that for the last thirty years events are of no importance. They may make a great many people unhappy, they may cause convulsions in history, but from the standpoint of excitement, the kind of excitement the Nineteenth Century got out of events doesn't exist.

And so what I am trying to make you understand is that every contemporary writer has to find out what is the inner time-sense of his contemporariness. The writer or painter, or what not, feels this thing more vibrantly, and he has a passionate need of putting it down; and that is what creativeness does. He spends his life in putting down this thing which he doesn't know is a contemporary thing. If he doesn't put down the contemporary thing, he isn't a great writer, for he has to live in the past. That is what I mean by 'everything is contemporary.' The minor poets of the period, or the precious poets of the period, are all people who are under the shadow of the past. A man who is making a revolution has to be contemporary. A minor person can live in the imagination. That tells the story pretty completely.

The question of repetition is very important. It is important because there is no such thing as repetition. Everybody tells every story in about the same way. You know perfectly well that when you and your roommates tell something, you are telling the same story in about the same way. But the point about it is this. Everybody is telling the story in the same way. But if you listen carefully, you will see that not all the story is the same. There is always a slight variation. Somebody comes in, and you tell the story over again. Every time you tell that story it is told

slightly differently. All my early work was a careful listening to all the people telling their story, and I conceived the idea which is, funnily enough, the same as the idea of the cinema. The cinema goes on the same principle: each picture is just infinitesimally different from the one before. If you listen carefully, you say something, the other person says something; but each time it changes just a little, until finally you come to the point where you convince him or you don't convince him. I used to listen very carefully to people talking. I had a passion for knowing just what I call their 'insides.' And in *The Making of Americans* I did this thing; but of course to my mind there is no repetition. For instance, in these early 'Portraits,' and in a whole lot of them in this book (*Portraits and Prayers*) you will see that every time a statement is made about someone being somewhere, that statement is different. If I had repeated, nobody would listen. Nobody could be in the room with a person who said the same thing over and over. He would drive everybody mad. There has to be a very slight change. Really listen to the way you talk, and every time you change it a little bit. That change, to me, was a very important thing to find out. You will see that when I kept on saying something was something or somebody was somebody, I changed it just a little bit until I got a whole portrait. I conceived the idea of building this thing up. It was all based upon this thing of everybody's slightly building this thing up. What I was after was this immediacy. A single photograph doesn't give it. I was trying for this thing, and so to my mind there is no repetition. The only thing that is repetition is when somebody tells you what he has learned.

No matter how you say it, you say it differently. It was this that led me in all that early work.

You see, finally, after I got this thing as completely as I could, then, of course, it being my nature, I wanted to tear it down. I attacked the problem from another way. I listened to people. I condensed it in about three words. There again, if you read those later 'Portraits,' you will see that I used three or four words instead of making a cinema of it. I wanted to condense it as much as possible and change it around, until you could get the movement of a human being. If I wanted to make a picture of you as you sit there, I would wait until I got a picture of you as individuals and then I'd change them until I got a picture of you as a whole.

I did these 'Portraits,' and then I got the idea of doing plays. I had the 'Portraits' so much in my head that I would almost know how you differ one from the other. I got this idea of the play, and put it down in a few words. I wanted to put them down in that way, and I began writing plays and I wrote a great many of them. The Nineteenth Century wrote a great many plays, and none of them are now read, because the Nineteenth Century wanted to put their novels on the stage. The better the play the more static. The minute you try to make a play a novel, it doesn't work. That is the reason I got interested in doing these plays.

When you get to that point there is no essential difference between prose and poetry. This is essentially the problem with which your generation will have to wrestle. The thing has got to the point where poetry and prose have to concern themselves with the static thing. That is up to you.





## PART VII · COMING-OF-AGE IN OUR TIME

ONE OF US is one individual; we are several or many, at different times and at different ages. One way of seeing this is to watch the individual grow up. The following selections proceed through the seven, and more, ages of man, from the bright springtime of his childhood, through the wondering awkwardness of adolescence, the worldly assurance of young manhood, and the uncertainty of middle age to the resigned or defiant acceptance of old age. The Cummings and MacLeish poems show us children who "belong," who feel themselves part of things; Wolfe's "lost boy" discovers that something he once clung to has gone from his life. The boys in the five stories which follow are discovering moral values, learning to accept what has to be, developing the flexibility which any organism must possess to survive. As they become aware of their own fragility in a harsh natural and social world, they have glimpses of something unbreakable and immutable that may be theirs in time. With Housman, they are coming to look on the beauty of the world with mature eyes.

No recent generation has grown up without close knowledge of war or time of war. The selections from Wilfred Owen and those which follow look on war as a part of experience, to be accepted with irony or humor or pity or fear.

Various adjustments to middle age are presented by Robinson, Steinbeck, and Thurber; decisions of old age by Masfield and Tennyson.

The last few selections are concerned with what can and cannot be said to the young in the form of advice; they suggest that there is more to a man's life than the process of merely existing through several stages of growth. William James's essay, which is his advice to the world on its greatest problem, returns to the subject of war and looks to a possible solution for the future.

*... all the men and women merely players:  
They have their exits and their entrances;  
And one man in his time plays many parts,  
His acts being seven ages.*

—As You Like It

## IN JUST-SPRING

by E. E. CUMMINGS

in Just-  
spring      when the world is mud-  
luscious the little  
lame balloonman  
  
whistles      far      and wee  
  
and eddieandbill come  
running from marbles and  
piracies and it's  
spring  
  
when the world is puddle-wonderful  
  
the queer  
old balloonman whistles  
far      and      wee  
and bettyandisabel come dancing  
  
from hop-scotch and jump-rope and  
  
it's  
spring  
and  
the  
  
goat-footed  
  
balloonman      whistles  
far  
and  
wee

## ELEVEN

by ARCHIBALD MACLEISH

And summer mornings the mute child, rebellious,  
Stupid, hating the words, the meanings, hating  
The Think now, Think, the O but Think! would leave  
On tiptoe the three chairs on the verandah  
And crossing tree by tree the empty lawn  
Push back the shed door and upon the sill  
Stand pressing out the sunlight from his eyes  
And enter and with outstretched fingers feel  
The grindstone and behind it the bare wall  
And turn and in the corner on the cool  
Hard earth sit listening. And one by one,  
Out of the dazzled shadow in the room  
The shapes would gather, the brown plowshare, spades,  
Mattocks, the polished helms of picks, a scythe  
Hung from the rafters, shovels, slender tines  
Glinting across the curve of sickles—shapes  
Older than men were, the wise tools, the iron  
Friendly with earth. And sit there quiet, breathing  
The harsh dry smell of withered bulbs, the faint  
Odor of dung, the silence. And outside  
Beyond the half-shut door the blind leaves  
And the corn moving. And at noon would come,  
Up from the garden, his hard crooked hands  
Gentle with earth, his knees still earth-stained, smelling  
Of sun, of summer, the old gardener, like  
A priest, like an interpreter, and bend  
Over his baskets.

And they would not speak:  
They would say nothing. And the child would sit there  
Happy as though he had no name, as though  
He had been no one: like a leaf, a stem,  
Like a root growing—

The selection from Archibald MacLeish *Poems 1924-1933* is used by permission of the publishers, Houghton Mifflin Company.

# THE LOST BOY

by THOMAS WOLFE

## I

LIGHT CAME and went and came again, the booming strokes of three o'clock beat out across the town in thronging bronze from the courthouse bell, light winds of April blew the fountain out in rainbow sheets, until the plume returned and pulsed, as Grover turned into the Square. He was a child, dark-eyed and grave, birthmarked upon his neck—a berry of warm brown—and with a gentle face, too quiet and too listening for his years. The scuffed boy's shoes, the thick-ribbed stockings gartered at the knees, the short knee pants cut straight with three small useless buttons at the side, the sailor blouse, the old cap battered out of shape, perched sideways up on top of the raven head, the old soiled canvas bag slung from the shoulder, empty now, but waiting for the crisp sheets of the afternoon—these friendly, shabby garments, shaped by Grover, uttered him. He turned and passed along the north side of the Square and in that moment saw the union of Forever and of Now.

Light came and went and came again, the great plume of the fountain pulsed and winds of April sheeted it across the Square in a rainbow gossamer of spray. The fire department horses drummed on the floors with wooden stomp, most casually, and with dry whiskings of their clean, coarse tails. The street cars ground into the Square from every portion of the compass and halted briefly like wound toys in their familiar quarter-hourly formula. A dray, hauled by a boneyard nag, rattled across the cobbles on the other side before his father's shop. The courthouse bell

boomed out its solemn warning of immediate three, and everything was just the same as it had always been.

He saw that haggis of vexed shapes with quiet eyes—that hodgepodge of ill-sorted architectures that made up the Square, and he did not feel lost. For "Here," thought Grover, "here is the Square as it has always been—and papa's shop, the fire department and the City Hall, the fountain pulsing with its plume, the street cars coming in and halting at the quarter hour, the hardware store on the corner there, the row of old brick buildings on this side of the street, the people passing and the light that comes and changes and that always will come back again, and everything that comes and goes and changes in the Square, and yet will be the same again. And here," the boy thought, "is Grover with his paper bag. Here is old Grover, almost twelve years old. Here is the month of April, 1904. Here is the courthouse bell and three o'clock. Here is Grover on the Square that never changes. Here is Grover, caught upon this point of time."

It seemed to him that the Square, itself the accidental masonry of many years, the chance agglomeration of time and of disrupted strivings, was the center of the universe. It was for him, in his soul's picture, the earth's pivot, the granite core of changelessness, the eternal place where all things came and passed, and yet abode forever and would never change.

He passed the old shack on the corner—the wooden fire-trap where S. Goldberg

## The Lost Boy

ran his wiener stand. Then he passed the Singer place next door, with its gleaming display of new machines. He saw them and admired them, but he felt no joy. They brought back to him the busy hum of housework and of women sewing, the intricacy of stitch and weave, the mystery of style and pattern, the memory of women bending over flashing needles, the pedaled tread, the busy whirl. It was women's work: it filled him with unknown associations of dullness and of vague depression. And always, also, with a moment's twinge of horror, for his dark eye would always travel toward that needle stitching up and down so fast the eye could never follow it. And then he would remember how his mother once had told him she had driven the needle through her finger, and always, when he passed this place, he would remember it and for a moment crane his neck and turn his head away.

He passed on then, but had to stop again next door before the music store. He always had to stop by places that had shining perfect things in them. He loved hardware stores and windows full of accurate geometric tools. He loved windows full of hammers, saws, and planing boards. He liked windows full of strong new rakes and hoes, with unworn handles, of white perfect wood, stamped hard and vivid with the maker's seal. He loved to see such things as these in the windows of hardware stores. And he would fairly gloat upon them and think that some day he would own a set himself.

Also, he always stopped before the music and piano store. It was a splendid store. And in the window was a small white dog upon his haunches, with head cocked gravely to one side, a small white dog that never moved, that never barked,

that listened attentively at the flaring funnel of a horn to hear "His Master's Voice"—a horn forever silent, and a voice that never spoke. And within were many rich and shining shapes of great pianos, an air of splendor and of wealth.

And now, indeed, he *was* caught, held suspended. A waft of air, warm, chocolate-laden, filled his nostrils. He tried to pass the white front of the little eight-foot shop; he paused, struggling with conscience; he could not go on. It was the little candy shop run by old Crocker and his wife. And Grover could not pass.

"Old stingy Crockers!" he thought scornfully. "I'll not go there any more. But—" as the maddening fragrance of rich cooking chocolate touched him once again—"I'll just look in the window and see what they've got." He paused a moment, looking with his dark and quiet eyes into the window of the little candy shop. The window, spotlessly clean, was filled with trays of fresh-made candy. His eyes rested on a tray of chocolate drops. Unconsciously he licked his lips. Put one of them upon your tongue and it just melted there, like honeydew. And then the trays full of rich home-made fudge. He gazed longingly at the deep body of the chocolate fudge, reflectively at maple walnut, more critically, yet with longing, at the mints, the nougatines, and all the other dainties.

"Old stingy Crockers!" Grover muttered once again, and turned to go. "I wouldn't go in *there* again."

And yet he did not go away. "Old stingy Crockers" they might be; still, they did make the best candy in town, the best, in fact, that he had ever tasted.

He looked through the window back into the little shop and saw Mrs. Crocker there. A customer had gone in and had

## *Coming-of-Age in Our Time*

made a purchase, and as Grover looked he saw Mrs. Crocker, with her little wrenny face, her pinched features, lean over and peer primly at the scales. She had a piece of fudge in her clean, bony, little fingers, and as Grover looked, she broke it, primly, in her little bony hands. She dropped a morsel down into the scales. They weighted down alarmingly, and her thin lips tightened. She snatched the piece of fudge out of the scales and broke it carefully once again. This time the scales wavered, went down very slowly, and came back again. Mrs. Crocker carefully put the reclaimed piece of fudge back in the tray, dumped the remainder in a paper bag, folded it and gave it to the customer, counted the money carefully and doled it out into the till, the pennies in one place, the nickels in another.

Grover stood there, looking scornfully. "Old stingy Crocker—afraid that she might give a crumb away!"

He grunted scornfully and again he turned to go. But now Mr. Crocker came out from the little partitioned place where they made all their candy, bearing a tray of fresh-made fudge in his skinny hands. Old Man Crocker rocked along the counter to the front and put it down. He really rocked along. He was a cripple. And like his wife, he was a wrenny, wizened little creature, with bony hands, thin lips, a pinched and meager face. One leg was inches shorter than the other, and on this leg there was an enormous thick-soled boot, with a kind of wooden, rocker-like arrangement, six inches high at least, to make up for the deficiency. On this wooden cradle Mr. Crocker rocked along, with a prim and apprehensive little smile, as if he were afraid he was going to lose something.

"Old stingy Crocker!" muttered Grover.

"Humph! He wouldn't give you anything!"

And yet—he did not go away. He hung there curiously, peering through the window, with his dark and gentle face now focused and intent, alert and curious, flattening his nose against the glass. Unconsciously he scratched the thick-ribbed fabric of one stockinged leg with the scuffed and worn toe of his old shoe. The fresh, warm odor of the new-made fudge was delicious. It was a little maddening. Half consciously he began to fumble in one trouser pocket, and pulled out his purse, a shabby worn old black one with a twisted clasp. He opened it and prowled about inside.

What he found was not inspiring—a nickel and two pennies and—he had forgotten them—the stamps. He took the stamps out and unfolded them. There were five twos, eight ones, all that remained of the dollar-sixty-cents' worth which Reed, the pharmacist, had given him for running errands a week or two before.

"Old Crocker," Grover thought, and looked somberly at the grotesque little form as it rocked back into the shop again, around the counter, and up the other side. "Well—" again he looked indefinitely at the stamps in his hand—"he's had all the rest of them. He might as well take these."

So, soothing conscience with this sop of scorn, he went into the shop and stood looking at the trays in the glass case and finally decided. Pointing with a slightly grimy finger at the fresh-made tray of chocolate fudge, he said, "I'll take fifteen cents' worth of this, Mr. Crocker." He paused a moment, fighting with embarrassment, then he lifted his dark face and said quietly, "And please, I'll have to give you stamps again."

## *The Lost Boy*

Mr. Crocker made no answer. He did not look at Grover. He pressed his lips together primly. He went rocking away and got the candy scoop, came back, slid open the door of the glass case, put fudge into the scoop, and, rocking to the scales, began to weigh the candy out. Grover watched him as he peered and squinted, he watched him purse and press his lips together, he saw him take a piece of fudge and break it in two parts. And then old Crocker broke two parts in two again. He weighed, he squinted, and he hovered, until it seemed to Grover that by calling *Mrs. Crocker* stingy he had been guilty of a rank injustice. But finally, to his vast relief, the job was over, the scales hung there, quivering apprehensively, upon the very hair-line of nervous balance, as if even the scales were afraid that one more move from Old Man Crocker and they would be undone.

Mr. Crocker took the candy then and dumped it in a paper bag and, rocking back along the counter toward the boy, he dryly said: "Where are the stamps?" Grover gave them to him. Mr. Crocker relinquished his claw-like hold upon the bag and set it down upon the counter. Grover took the bag and dropped it in his canvas sack, and then remembered. "Mr. Crocker—" again he felt the old embarrassment that was almost like strong pain—"I gave you too much," Grover said. "There were eighteen cents in stamps. You—you can just give me three ones back."

Mr. Crocker did not answer. He was busy with his bony little hands, unfolding the stamps and flattening them out on top of the glass counter. When he had done so, he peered at them sharply for a moment, thrusting his scrawny neck forward and running his eye up and

down, like a bookkeeper who totes up rows of figures.

When he had finished, he said tartly: "I don't like this kind of business. If you want candy, you should have the money for it. I'm not a post office. The next time you come in here and want anything, you'll have to pay me money for it."

Hot anger rose in Grover's throat. His olive face suffused with angry color. His tarry eyes got black and bright. He was on the verge of saying: "Then why did you take my other stamps? Why do you tell me now, when you have taken all the stamps I had, that you don't want them?"

But he was a boy, a boy of eleven years, a quiet, gentle, gravely thoughtful boy, and he had been taught how to respect his elders. So he just stood there looking with his tar-black eyes. Old Man Crocker, pursing at the mouth a little, without meeting Grover's gaze, took the stamps up in his thin, parched fingers and, turning, rocked away with them down to the till.

He took the twos and folded them and laid them in one rounded scallop, then took the ones and folded them and put them in the one next to it. Then he closed the till and started to rock off, down toward the other end. Grover, his face now quiet and grave, kept looking at him, but Mr. Crocker did not look at Grover. Instead he began to take some stamped cardboard shapes and fold them into boxes.

In a moment Grover said, "Mr. Crocker, will you give me the three ones, please?"

Mr. Crocker did not answer. He kept folding boxes, and he compressed his thin lips quickly as he did so. But Mrs. Crocker, back turned to her spouse, also folding boxes with her birdlike hands, muttered: "Hm! I'd give him nothing!"

Mr. Crocker looked up, looked at



## *Coming-of-Age in Our Time*

Grover said, "What are you waiting for?"

"Will you give me the three ones, please?" Grover said.

"I'll give you nothing," Mr. Crocker said.

He left his work and came rocking forward along the counter. "Now you get out of here! Don't you come in here with any more of those stamps," said Mr. Crocker.

"I should like to know where he gets them—that's what *I* should like to know," said Mrs. Crocker.

She did not look up as she said these words. She inclined her head a little to the side, in Mr. Crocker's direction, and continued to fold the boxes with her bony fingers.

"You get out of here!" said Mr. Crocker. "And don't you come back here with any stamps. . . . Where did you get those stamps?" he said.

"That's just what *I've* been thinking," Mrs. Crocker said. "*I've* been thinking all along."

"You've been coming in here for the last two weeks with those stamps," said Mr. Crocker. "I don't like the look of it. Where did you get those stamps?" he said.

"That's what *I've* been thinking," said Mrs. Crocker, for a second time.

Grover had got white underneath his olive skin. His eyes had lost their luster. They looked like dull, stunned balls of tar. "From Mr. Reed," he said. "I got the stamps from Mr. Reed." Then he burst out desperately. "Mr. Crocker—Mr. Reed will tell you how I got the stamps. I did some work for Mr. Reed, he gave me those stamps two weeks ago."

"Mr. Reed," said Mrs. Crocker acidly. She did not turn her head. "I call it mighty funny."

"Mr. Crocker," Grover said, "if you'll just let me have three ones—"

"You get out of here!" cried Mr. Crocker, and he began rocking forward toward Grover. "Now don't you come in here again, boy! There's something funny about this whole business! I don't like the look of it," said Mr. Crocker. "If you can't pay as other people do, then I don't want your trade."

"Mr. Crocker," Grover said again, and underneath the olive skin his face was gray, "if you'll just let me have those three—"

"You get out of here!" Mr. Crocker cried, rocking down toward the counter's end. "If you don't get out, boy—"

"*I'd* call a policeman, that's what *I'd* do," Mrs. Crocker said.

Mr. Crocker rocked around the lower end of the counter. He came rocking up to Grover. "You get out," he said.

He took the boy and pushed him with his bony little hands, and Grover was sick and gray down to the hollow pit of his stomach.

"You've got to give me those three ones," he said.

"You get out of here!" shrilled Mr. Crocker. He seized the screen door, pulled it open, and pushed Grover out. "Don't you come back in here," he said, pausing for a moment, and working thinly at the lips. He turned and rocked back in the shop again. The screen door slammed behind him. Grover stood there on the pavement. And light came and went and came again into the Square.

The boy stood there, and a wagon rattled past. There were some people passing by, but Grover did not notice them. He stood there blindly, in the watches of the sun, feeling this was Time, this was the center of the universe, the granite core of

## *The Lost Boy*

changelessness, and feeling, this is Grover, this the Square, this is Now.

But something had gone out of day. He felt the overwhelming, soul-sickening guilt that all the children, all the good men of the earth, have felt since Time began. And even anger had died down, had been drowned out, in this swelling tide of guilt, and "This is the Square"—thought Grover as before—"This is Now. There is my father's shop. And all of it is as it has always been—save I."

And the Square reeled drunkenly around him, light went in blind gray motes before his eyes, the fountain sheeted out to rainbow iridescence and returned to its proud, pulsing plume again. But all the brightness had gone out of day, and "Here is the Square, and here is permanence, and here is Time—and all of it the same as it has always been, save I."

The scuffed boots of the lost boy moved and stumbled blindly. The numb feet crossed the pavement—reached the cobbled street, reached the plotted central square—the grass plots, and the flower beds, so soon to be packed with red geraniums.

"I want to be alone," thought Grover, "where I cannot go near him. . . . Oh God, I hope he never hears, that no one ever tells him—"

The plume blew out, the iridescent sheet of spray blew over him. He passed through, found the other side and crossed the street, and—"Oh God, if papa ever hears!" thought Grover, as his numb feet started up the steps into his father's shop.

He found and felt the steps—the width and thickness of old lumber twenty feet in length. He saw it all—the iron columns on his father's porch, painted with the dull anomalous black-green that all such columns in this land and weather come

to; two angels, fly-specked, and the waiting stones. Beyond and all around, in the stonecutter's shop, cold shapes of white and marble, rounded stone, the languid angel with strong marble hands of love.

He went on down the aisle, the white shapes stood around him. He went on to the back of the workroom. This he knew—the little cast-iron stove in left-hand corner, caked, brown, heat-blistered, and the elbow of the long stack running out across the shop; the high and dirty window looking down across the Market Square toward Niggertown; the rude old shelves, plank-boarded, thick, the wood not smooth but pulpy, like the strong hair of an animal; upon the shelves the chisels of all sizes and a layer of stone dust; an emery wheel with pump tread; and a door that let out on the alleyway, yet the alleyway twelve feet below. Here in the room, two trestles of this coarse spiked wood upon which rested gravestones, and at one, his father at work.

The boy looked, saw the name was Creasman: saw the carved analysis of John, the symmetry of the s, the fine sentiment that was being polished off beneath the name and date: "John Creasman, November 7, 1903."

Gant looked up. He was a man of fifty-three, gaunt-visaged, mustache cropped, immensely long and tall and gaunt. He wore good dark clothes—heavy, massive—save he had no coat. He worked in shirt-sleeves with his vest on, a strong watch chain stretching across his vest, wing collar and black tie, Adam's apple, bony forehead, bony nose, light eyes, gray-green, undep and cold, and, somehow, lonely-looking, a striped apron going up around his shoulders and starched cuffs. And in one hand a tremendous rounded wooden

## *Coming-of-Age in Our Time*

mallet like a butcher's bole; and in his other hand, a strong cold chisel.

"How are you, son?"

He did not look up as he spoke. He spoke quietly, absently. He worked upon the chisel and the wooden mallet, as a jeweler might work on a watch, except that in the man and in the wooden mallet there was power too.

"What is it, son?" he said.

He moved around the table from the head, started up on "J" once again.

"Papa, I never stole the stamps," said Grover.

Gant put down the mallet, laid the chisel down. He came around the trestle.

"What?" he said.

As Grover winked his tar-black eyes, they brightened, the hot tears shot out. "I never stole the stamps," he said.

"Hey? What is this?" his father said. "What stamps?"

"That Mr. Reed gave me, when the other boy was sick and I worked there for three days. . . . And Old Man Crocker," Grover said, "he took all the stamps. And I told him Mr. Reed had given them to me. And now he owes me three ones—and Old Man Crocker says he don't believe that they were mine. He says—he says—that I must have taken them somewhere," Grover blurted out.

"The stamps that Reed gave you—hey?" the stonecutter said. "The stamps you had—" He wet his thumb upon his lips, threw back his head and slowly swung his gaze around the ceiling, then turned and strode quickly from his workshop out into the storeroom.

Almost at once he came back again, and as he passed the old gray painted-board partition of his office he cleared his throat and wet his thumb and said, "Now, I tell you—"

Then he turned and strode up toward the front again and cleared his throat and said, "I tell you now—" He wheeled about and started back, and as he came along the aisle between the marshaled rows of gravestones he said beneath his breath, "By God, now—"

He took Grover by the hand and they went out flying. Down the aisle they went by all the gravestones, past the fly-specked angels waiting there, and down the wooden steps and across the Square. The fountain pulsed, the plume blew out in sheeted iridescence, and it swept across them; an old gray horse, with a peaceful look about his torn lips, swucked up the cool mountain water from the trough as Grover and his father went across the Square, but they did not notice it.

They crossed swiftly to the other side in a direct line to the candy shop. Gant was still dressed in his long striped apron, and he was still holding Grover by the hand. He opened the screen door and stepped inside.

"Give him the stamps," Gant said.

Mr. Crocker came rocking forward behind the counter, with the prim and careful look that now was somewhat like a smile. "It was just—" he said.

"Give him the stamps," Gant said, and threw some coins down on the counter.

Mr. Crocker rocked away and got the stamps. He came rocking back. "I just didn't know—" he said.

The stonecutter took the stamps and gave them to the boy. And Mr. Crocker took the coins.

"It was just that—" Mr. Crocker began again, and smiled.

Gant cleared his throat: "You never were a father," he said. "You never knew the feelings of a father, or understood the feelings of a child; and that is why you

## *The Lost Boy*

acted as you did. But a judgment is upon you. God has cursed you. He has afflicted you. He has made you lame and childless as you are—and lame and childless, miserable as you are, you will go to your grave and be forgotten!"

And Crocker's wife kept kneading her bony little hands and said, imploringly, "Oh, no—oh don't say that, please don't say that."

The stonecutter, the breath still hoarse in him, left the store, still holding the boy tightly by the hand. Light came again into the day.

"Well, son," he said, and laid his hand on the boy's back. "Well, son," he said, "now don't you mind."

They walked across the Square, the sheeted spray of iridescent light swept out on them, the horse swizzled at the water-trough, and "Well, son," the stonecutter said.

And the old horse sloped down, ringing with his hoofs upon the cobblestones.

"Well, son," said the stonecutter once again, "be a good boy."

And he trod his own steps then with his

great stride and went back again into his shop.

The lost boy stood upon the Square, hard by the porch of his father's shop.

"This is Time," thought Grover. "Here is the Square, here is my father's shop, and here am I."

And light came and went and came again—but now not quite the same as it had done before. The boy saw the pattern of familiar shapes and knew that they were just the same as they had always been. But something had gone out of day, and something had come in again. Out of the vision of those quiet eyes some brightness had gone, and into their vision had come some deeper color. He could not say, he did not know through what transforming shadows life had passed within that quarter hour. He only knew that something had been lost—something forever gained.

Just then a buggy curved out through the Square, and fastened to the rear end was a poster, and it said "St. Louis" and "Excursion" and "The Fair."

## *II—The Mother*

As we went down through Indiana—you were too young, child, to remember it—but I always think of all of you the way you looked that morning, when we went down through Indiana, going to the Fair. All of the apple trees were coming out, and it was April; it was the beginning of spring in southern Indiana and everything was getting green. Of course we don't have farms at home like those in Indiana. The children had never seen such farms as those, and I reckon, kidlike, they had to take it in.

So all of them kept running up and

down the aisle—well, no, except for you and Grover. *You* were too young, Eugene. You were just three, I kept you with me. As for Grover—well, I'm going to tell you about that.

But the rest of them kept running up and down the aisle and from one window to another. They kept calling out and hollering to each other every time they saw something new. They kept trying to look out on all sides, in every way at once, as if they wished they had eyes at the back of their heads. It was the first time any of them had ever been in Indiana, and I

## Coming-of-Age in Our Time

reckon that it all seemed strange and new.

And so it seemed they couldn't get enough. It seemed they never could be still. They kept running up and down and back and forth, hollering and shouting to each other, until—"I'll vow! You children! I never saw the beat of you!" I said. "The way that you keep running up and down and back and forth and never can be quiet for a minute beats all I ever saw," I said.

You see, they were excited about going to St. Louis, and so curious over everything they saw. They couldn't help it, and they wanted to see everything. But—"I'll vow!" I said. "If you children don't sit down and rest you'll be worn to a frazzle before we ever get to see St. Louis and the Fair!"

Except for Grover! He—no, sir! not him. Now, boy, I want to tell you—I've raised the lot of you—and if I do say so, there wasn't a numbskull in the lot. But *Grover!* Well, you've all grown up now, all of you have gone away, and none of you are children any more. . . . And of course, I hope that, as the fellow says, you have reached the dignity of man's estate. I suppose you have the judgment of grown men. . . . But *Grover!* *Grover* had it even then!

Oh, even as a child, you know—at a time when I was almost afraid to trust the rest of you out of my sight—I could depend on Grover. He could go anywhere, I could send him anywhere, and I'd always know he'd get back safe, and do exactly what I told him to!

Why, I didn't even have to tell him. You could send that child to market and tell him what you wanted, and he'd come home with *twice* as much as you could get yourself for the same money!

Now you know, I've always been consid-

ered a good trader. But *Grover!*—why, it got so finally that I wouldn't even tell him. Your papa said to me: "You'd be better off if you'd just tell him what you want and leave the rest to him. For," your papa says, "damned if I don't believe he's a better trader than you are. He gets more for the money than anyone I ever saw."

Well, I had to admit it, you know. I had to own up then. Grover, even as a child, was a far better trader than I was. . . . Why, yes, they told it on him all over town, you know. They said all of the market men, all of the farmers, knew him. They'd begin to laugh when they saw him coming—they'd say: "Look out! Here's Grover! Here's one trader you're not going to fool!"

And they were right! *That* child! I'd say, "Grover, suppose you run uptown and see if they've got anything good to *eat* today"—and I'd just wink at him, you know, but he'd know what I meant. I wouldn't let on that I *wanted* anything exactly, but I'd say, "Now it just occurs to me that some good fresh stuff may be coming in from the country, so suppose you take this dollar and just see what you can do with it."

Well, sir, that was all that was needed. The minute you told that child that you depended on his judgment, he'd have gone to the ends of the earth for you—and, let me tell you something, he wouldn't *miss*, either!

His eyes would get as black as coals—oh! the way that child would look at you, the intelligence and sense in his expression. He'd say: "Yes, *ma'am!* Now don't you worry, mama. You leave it all to me—and I'll do *good!*" said Grover.

And he'd be off like a streak of lightning and—oh Lord! As your father said to me, "I've been living in this town for

almost thirty years," he said—"I've seen it grow up from a crossroads village, and I thought I knew everything there was to know about it—but that child—" your papa says—"he knows places that I never heard of!" . . . Oh, he'd go right down there to that place below your papa's shop where the draymen and the country people used to park their wagons—or he'd go down there to those old lots on Concord Street where the farmers used to keep their wagons. And, child that he was, he'd go right in among them, sir—*Grover* would!—go right in and barter with them like a grown man!

And he'd come home with things he'd bought that would make your eyes stick out. . . . Here he comes one time with another boy, dragging a great bushel basket full of ripe termaters between them. "Why, *Grover*!" I says. "How on earth are we ever going to use them? Why they'll go bad on us before we're half way through with them." "Well, mama," he says, "I know—" oh, just as solemn as a judge—"but they were the last the man had," he says, "and he wanted to go home, and so I got them for ten cents," he says. "They were so cheap," said *Grover*, "I thought it was a shame to let 'em go, and I figgered that what we couldn't eat—why," says *Grover*, "you could *put up*!" Well, the way he said it—so earnest and so serious—I had to laugh. "But I'll vow!" I said. "If you don't beat all!" . . . But that was *Grover*!—the way he was in *those* days! As everyone said, boy that he was, he had the sense and judgment of a grown man. . . . Child, child, I've seen you all grow up, and all of you were bright enough. There were no half-wits in *my* family. But for all-round intelligence, judgment, and general ability, *Grover* surpassed the whole

crowd. I've never seen his equal, and everyone who knew him as a child will say the same.

So that's what I tell them now when they ask me about all of you. I have to tell the truth. I always said that *you* were smart enough, Eugene—but when they come around and brag to me about you, and about how you have got on and have a kind of name—I don't let on, you know. I just sit there and let them talk. I don't brag on you—if *they* want to brag on you, that's *their* business. I never bragged on one of my own children in my life. When father raised us up, we were all brought up to believe that it was not good breeding to brag about your kin. "If the others want to do it," father said, "well, let *them* do it. Don't ever let on by a word or sign that you know what they are talking about. Just let *them* do the talking, and say nothing."

So when they come around and tell me all about the things *you've* done—I don't let on to them, I never say a word. Why yes!—why, here, you know—oh, along about a month or so ago, this feller comes—a well-dressed man, you know—he looked intelligent, a good substantial sort of person. He said he came from New Jersey, or somewhere up in that part of the country, and he began to ask me all sorts of questions—what you were like when you were a boy, and all such stuff as that.

I just pretended to study it all over and then I said, "Well, yes"—real serious-like, you know—"well, yes—I reckon I ought to know a little something about him. Eugene was my child, just the same as all the others were. I brought him up just the way I brought up all the others. And," I says—oh, just as solemn as you please—

## *Coming-of-Age in Our Time*

"he wasn't a *bad* sort of a boy. Why," I says, "up to the time that he was twelve years old he was just about the same as any other boy—a good, average, normal sort of fellow."

"Oh," he says, "But didn't you notice something? Wasn't there something kind of strange?" he says—"something different from what you noticed in the other children?"

I didn't let on, you know—I just took it all in and looked as solemn as an owl—I just pretended to study it all over, just as serious as you please.

"Why no," I says, real slow-like, after I'd studied it all over. "As I remember it, he was a good, ordinary, normal sort of boy, just like all the others."

"Yes," he says—oh, all excited-like, you know—"But didn't you notice how brilliant he was? Eugene must have been more brilliant than the rest!"

"Well, now," I says, and pretended to study that all over too. "Now let me see. . . . Yes," I says—I just looked him in the eye, as solemn as you please—"he did pretty well. . . . Well, yes," I says, "I guess he was a fairly bright sort of a boy. I never had no complaints to make of him on that score. He was bright enough," I says. "The only trouble with him was that he was lazy."

"Lazy!" he says—oh, you should have seen the look upon his face, you know—he jumped like someone had stuck a pin in him. "Lazy!" he says. "Why, you don't mean to tell me—"

"Yes," I says—oh, I never cracked a smile—"I was telling him the same thing myself the last time that I saw him. I told him it was a mighty lucky thing for him that he had the gift of gab. Of course, he went off to college and read a lot of books, and I reckon that's where he got this flow

of language they say he has. But as I said to him the last time that I saw him: 'Now look a-here,' I said. 'If you can earn your living doing a light, easy class of work like this you do,' I says, 'you're mighty lucky, because none of the rest of your people,' I says, 'had any such luck as that. They had to work hard for a living.'"

Oh, I told him, you know. I came right out with it. I made no bones about it. And I tell you what—I wish you could have seen his face. It was a study.

"Well," he says, at last, "you've got to admit this, haven't you—he was the brightest boy you had, now wasn't he?"

I just looked at him a moment. I had to tell the truth. I couldn't fool him any longer. "No," I says. "He was a good, bright boy—I got no complaint to make about him on that score—but the brightest boy I had, the one that surpassed all the rest of them in sense, and understanding, and in judgment—the best boy I had—the smartest boy I ever saw—was—well, it wasn't Eugene," I said. "It was another one."

He looked at me a moment, then he said, "Which boy was that?"

Well, I just looked at him, and smiled. I shook my head, you know. I wouldn't tell him. "I never brag about my own," I said. "You'll have to find out for yourself."

But—I'll have to tell *you*—and you know yourself, I brought the whole crowd up, I knew you all. And you can take my word for it—the best one of the lot was—*Grover!*

And when I think of Grover as he was along about that time, I always see him sitting there, so grave and earnest-like, with his nose pressed to the window, as we went down through Indiana in the morning, to the Fair.

## The Last Boy

All through that morning we were going down along beside the Wabash River—the Wabash River flows through Indiana, it is the river that they wrote the song about—so all that morning we were going down along the river. And I sat with all you children gathered about me as we went down through Indiana, going to St. Louis, to the Fair.

And Grover sat there, so still and earnest-like, looking out the window, and he didn't move. He sat there like a man. He was just eleven and a half years old, but he had more sense, more judgment, and more understanding than any child I ever saw.

So here he sat beside this gentleman and looked out the window. I never knew the man—I never asked his name—but I tell you what! He was certainly a fine-looking, well-dressed, good, substantial sort of man, and I could see that he had taken a great liking to Grover. And Grover sat there looking out, and then turned to this gentleman, as grave and earnest as a grown-up man, and says, "What kind of crops grow here, sir?" Well, this gentleman threw his head back and just hah-hahed. "Well, I'll see if I can tell you," says this gentleman, and then, you know, he talked to him, they talked together, and Grover took it all in, as solemn as you please, and asked this gentleman every sort of question—what the trees were, what was growing there, how big the farms were—all sorts of questions, which

this gentleman would answer, until I said: "Why, I'll vow, Grover! You shouldn't ask so many questions. You'll bother the very life out of this gentleman."

The gentleman threw his head back and laughed right out. "Now you leave that boy alone. He's all right," he said. "He doesn't bother me a bit, and if I know the answers to his questions I will answer him. And if I don't know, why, then, I'll tell him so. But he's *all right*," he said, and put his arm round Grover's shoulders. "You leave him alone. He doesn't bother me a bit."

And I can still remember how he looked that morning, with his black eyes, his black hair, and with the birthmark on his neck—so grave, so serious, so earnest-like—as he sat by the train window and watched the apple trees, the farms, the barns, the houses, and the orchards, taking it all in, I reckon, because it was strange and new to him.

It was so long ago, but when I think of it, it all comes back, as if it happened yesterday. Now all of you have either died or grown up and gone away, and nothing is the same as it was then. But all of you were there with me that morning and I guess I should remember how the others looked, but somehow I don't. Yet I can still see Grover just the way he was, the way he looked that morning when we went down through Indiana, by the river, to the Fair.

### III—The Sister

Can you remember, Eugene, how Grover used to look? I mean the birthmark, the black eyes, the olive skin. The birthmark always showed because of those open sailor blouses kids used to wear. But

I guess you must have been too young when Grover died. . . . I was looking at that old photograph the other day. You know the one I mean—that picture showing mama and papa and all of us children



## *Coming-of-Age in Our Time*

before the house on Woodson Street. *You* weren't there, Eugene. *You* didn't get in. *You* hadn't arrived when that was taken. . . . *You* remember how mad *you* used to get when we'd tell *you* that *you* were only a dishrag hanging out in Heaven when something happened?

*You* were the baby. That's what *you* get for being the baby. *You* don't get in the picture, do *you*? . . . I was looking at that old picture just the other day. There we were. And, my God, what is it all about? I mean, when *you* see the way we were—Daisy and Ben and Grover, Steve and all of us—and then how everyone either dies or grows up and goes away—and then—look at us now! Do *you* ever get to feeling funny? *You* know what I mean—do *you* ever get to feeling *queer*—when *you* try to figure these things out? *You've* been to college and *you* ought to know the answer—and I wish *you'd* tell me if *you* know.

My Lord, when I think sometimes of the way I used to be—the dreams I used to have. Playing the piano, practicing seven hours a day, thinking that some day I would be a great pianist. Taking singing lessons from Aunt Nell because I felt that some day I was going to have a great career in opera. . . . Can *you* beat it now? Can *you* imagine it? *Me!* In grand opera! . . . Now I want to ask *you*. I'd like to know.

My Lord! When I go uptown and walk down the street and see all these funny-looking little boys and girls hanging around the drug store—do *you* suppose any of them have ambitions the way we did? Do *you* suppose any of these funny-looking little girls are thinking about a big career in opera? . . . Didn't *you* ever see that picture of us? I was looking at it just the other day. It was made before the old

house down on Woodson Street, with papa standing there in his swallow-tail, and mama there beside him—and Grover, and Ben, and Steve, and Daisy, and myself, with our feet upon our bicycles. Luke, poor kid, was only four or five. *He* didn't have a bicycle like us. But there he was. And there were all of us together.

Well, there I was, and my poor old skinny legs and long white dress, and two pigtails hanging down my back. And all the funny-looking clothes we wore, with the doo-lolley business on them. . . . But I guess *you* can't remember. *You* weren't born.

But, well, we were a right nice-looking set of people, if I do say so. And there was "86" the way it used to be, with the front porch, the grape vines, and the flower beds before the house—and "Miss Eliza" standing there by papa, with a watch charm pinned upon her waist. . . . I shouldn't laugh, but "Miss Eliza"—well, mama was a pretty woman then. Do *you* know what I mean? "Miss Eliza" was a right good-looking woman, and papa in his swallow-tail was a good-looking man. Do *you* remember how he used to get dressed up on Sunday? And how grand we thought he was? And how he let me take his money out and count it? And how rich we all thought he was? And how wonderful that dinkey little shop on the Square looked to us? . . . Can *you* beat it, now? Why we thought that papa was the biggest man in town and—oh, *you* can't tell me! *You* can't tell me! He had his faults, but papa was a wonderful man. *You* know he was!

And there was Steve and Ben and Grover, Daisy, Luke, and me lined up there before the house with one foot on our bicycles. And I got to thinking back about it all. It all came back.

## The Lost Boy

Do you remember anything about St. Louis? You were only three or four years old then, but you must remember something. . . . Do you remember how you used to bawl when I would scrub you? How you'd bawl for Grover? Poor kid, you used to yell for Grover every time I'd get you in the tub. . . . He was a sweet kid and he was crazy about you—he almost brought you up.

That year Grover was working at the Inside Inn out on the Fair Grounds. Do you remember the old Inside Inn? That big old wooden thing inside the Fair? And how I used to take you there to wait for Grover when he got through working? And old fat Billy Pelham at the newsstand—how he always used to give you a stick of chewing gum?

They were all crazy about Grover. Everybody liked him. . . . And how proud Grover was of you! Don't you remember how he used to show you off? How he used to take you around and make you talk to Billy Pelham? And Mr. Curtis at the desk? And how Grover would try to make you talk and get you to say "Grover"? And you couldn't say it—you couldn't pronounce the "r." You'd say "Gova." Have you forgotten that? You shouldn't forget *that*, because—you were a *cute* kid, then—Ho-ho-ho-ho-ho—I don't know where it's gone to, but you were a big hit in those days. . . . I tell you, boy, you were Somebody back in those days.

And I was thinking of it all the other day when I was looking at that photograph. How we used to go and meet Grover there, and how he'd take us to the Midway. Do you remember the Midway? The Snake-Eater and the Living Skeleton, the Fat Woman and the Chute-the-chute, the Scenic Railway and the Ferris Wheel?

How you bawled the night we took you up on the Ferris Wheel? You yelled your head off—I tried to laugh it off, but I tell you, I was scared myself. Back in those days, that was Something. And how Grover laughed at us and told us there was no danger. . . . My Lord! poor little Grover. He wasn't quite twelve years old at the time, but he seemed so grown up to us. I was two years older, but I thought he knew it all.

It was always that way with him. Looking back now, it sometimes seems that it was Grover who brought us up. He was always looking after us, telling us what to do, bringing us something—some ice cream or some candy, something he had bought out of the poor little money he'd gotten at the Inn.

Then I got to thinking of the afternoon we sneaked away from home. Mama had gone out somewhere. And Grover and I got on the street car and went downtown. And my Lord, we thought that we were going Somewhere. In those days, that was what we called a *trip*. A ride in the street car was something to write home about in those days. . . . I hear that it's all built up around there now.

So we got on the car and rode the whole way down into the business section of St. Louis. We got out on Washington Street and walked up and down. And I tell you, boy, we thought that that was Something. Grover took me into a drug store and set me up to soda water. Then we came out and walked around some more, down to the Union Station and clear over to the river. And both of us half scared to death at what we'd done and wondering what mama would say if she found out.

We stayed down there till it was getting dark, and we passed by a lunchroom—an old one-armed joint with one-armed chairs

## *Coming-of-Age in Our Time*

and people sitting on stools and eating at the counter. We read all the signs to see what they had to eat and how much it cost, and I guess nothing on the menu was more than fifteen cents, but it couldn't have looked grander to us if it had been Delmonico's. So we stood there with our noses pressed against the window, looking in. Two skinny little kids, both of us scared half to death, getting the thrill of a lifetime out of it. You know what I mean? And smelling everything with all our might and thinking how good it all smelled. . . . Then Grover turned to me and whispered: "Come on, Helen. Let's go in. It says fifteen cents for pork and beans. And I've got the money," Grover said. "I've got sixty cents."

I was so scared I couldn't speak. I'd never been in a place like that before. But I kept thinking, "Oh Lord, if mama should find out!" I felt as if we were committing some big crime. . . . Don't you know how it is when you're a kid? It was the thrill of a lifetime. . . . I couldn't resist. So we both went in and sat down on those high stools before the counter and ordered pork and beans and a cup of coffee. I suppose we were too frightened at what we'd done really to enjoy anything. We just gobbled it all up in a hurry, and gulped our coffee down. And I don't know whether it was the excitement—I guess the poor kid was already sick when we came in there and didn't know it. But I turned and looked at him, and he was white as death. . . . And when I asked him what was the matter, he wouldn't tell me. He was too proud. He said he was all right, but I could see that he was sick as a dog. . . . So he paid the bill. It came to forty cents—I'll never forget *that* as long as I live. . . . And sure enough, we no more than got out the door—he hardly had

time to reach the curb—before it all came up.

And the poor kid was so scared and so ashamed. And what scared him so was not that he had gotten sick, but that he had spent all that money and it had come to nothing. And mama would find out. . . . Poor kid, he just stood there looking at me and he whispered: "Oh Helen, don't tell mama. She'll be mad if she finds out." Then we hurried home, and he was still white as a sheet when we got there.

Mama was waiting for us. She looked at us—you know how "Miss Eliza" looks at you when she thinks you've been doing something that you shouldn't. Mama said, "Why, where on earth have you two children been?" I guess she was all set to lay us out. Then she took one look at Grover's face. That was enough for her. She said, "Why, child, what in the world!" She was white, as a sheet herself. . . . And all that Grover said was— "Mama, I feel sick."

He was sick as a dog. He fell over on the bed, and we undressed him and mama put her hand upon his forehead and came out in the hall—she was so white you could have made a black mark on her face with chalk—and whispered to me, "Go get the doctor quick, he's burning up."

And I went chasing up the street, my pigtailed flying, to Dr. Packer's house. I brought him back with me. When he came out of Grover's room he told mama what to do but I don't know if she even heard him.

Her face was white as a sheet. She looked at me and looked right through me. She never saw me. And oh, my Lord, I'll never forget the way she looked, the way my heart stopped and came up in my throat. I was only a skinny little kid of fourteen. But she looked as if she was dying right before my eyes. And I knew that if anything happened to him, she'd

## *The Lost Boy*

never get over it if she lived to be a hundred.

Poor old mama. You know, he always was her eyeballs—you know that, don't you?—not the rest of us!—no, sir! I know what I'm talking about. It always has been Grover—she always thought more of him than she did of any of the others. And—poor kid!—he was a sweet kid. I can still see him lying there, and remember how sick he was, and how scared I was! I don't know why I was so scared. All we'd done had been to sneak away from home and go into a lunchroom—but I felt guilty about the whole thing, as if it was my fault.

It all came back to me the other day when I was looking at that picture, and I thought, my God, we were two kids together, and I was only two years older than Grover was, and now I'm forty-six. . . . Can you believe it? Can you figure it out—the way we grow up and change and go away? . . . And my Lord, Grover seemed so grown-up to me. He was such a quiet kid—I guess that's why he seemed older than the rest of us.

I wonder what Grover would say now if he could see that picture. All my hopes and dreams and big ambitions have come to nothing, and it's all so long ago, as if it happened in another world. Then it comes back, as if it happened yesterday. . . . Sometimes I lie awake at night and think of all the people who have come and gone, and how everything is different from the way we thought that it would be. Then I go out on the street next day and see the faces of the people that I pass. . . . Don't they look strange to you? Don't you see something funny in people's eyes, as if all of them were puzzled about something? As if they were wondering what had happened to them since they were kids? Wondering what it is that they have lost? . . .

Now am I crazy, or do you know what I mean? You've been to college, Gene, and I want you to tell me if you know the answer. Now do they look that way to you? I never noticed that look in people's eyes when I was a kid—did you?

My God, I wish I knew the answer to these things. I'd like to find out what is wrong—what has changed since then—and if we have the same queer look in our eyes, too. Does it happen to us all, to everyone? . . . Grover and Ben, Steve, Daisy, Luke, and me—all standing there before that house on Woodson Street in Altamont—there we are, and you see the way we were—and how it all gets lost. What is it, anyway, that people lose?

How is it that nothing turns out the way we thought it would be? It all gets lost until it seems that it has never happened—that it is something we dreamed somewhere. . . . You see what I mean? . . . It seems that it must be something we heard somewhere—that it happened to someone else. And then it all comes back again.

And suddenly you remember just how it was, and see again those two funny, frightened, skinny little kids with their noses pressed against the dirty window of that lunchroom thirty years ago. You remember the way it felt, the way it smelled, even the strange smell in the old pantry in that house we lived in then. And the steps before the house, the way the rooms looked. And those two little boys in sailor suits who used to ride up and down before the house on tricycles. . . . And the birthmark on Grover's neck. . . . The Inside Inn. . . . St. Louis and the Fair.

It all comes back as if it happened yesterday. And then it goes away again, and seems farther off and stranger than if it happened in a dream.

## *Coming-of-Age in Our Time*

### *IV—The Brother*

"*This is King's Highway,*" the man said.

And then Eugene looked and saw that it was just a street. There were some big new buildings, a large hotel, some restaurants and "bar-grill" places of the modern kind, the livid monotone of neon lights, the ceaseless traffic of motor cars—all this was new, but it was just a street. And he knew that it had always been just a street and nothing more—but somehow—well, he stood there looking at it, wondering what else he had expected to find.

The man kept looking at him with inquiry in his eyes, and Eugene asked him if the Fair had not been out this way.

"Sure, the Fair was out beyond here," the man said. "Out where the park is now. But this street you're looking for—don't you remember the name of it or nothing?" the man said.

Eugene said he thought the name of the street was Edgemont, but that he wasn't sure. Anyhow it was something like that. And he said the house was on the corner of that street and of another street.

Then the man said: "What was that other street?"

Eugene said he did not know, but that King's Highway was a block or so away, and that an interurban line ran past about half a block from where he once had lived.

"What line was this?" the man said, and stared at him.

"The interurban line," Eugene said.

Then the man stared at him again, and finally, "I don't know no interurban line," he said.

Eugene said it was a line that ran behind some houses, and that there were board fences there and grass beside the tracks. But somehow he could not say

that it was summer in those days and that you could smell the ties, a wooden, tarry smell, and feel a kind of absence in the afternoon after the car had gone. He only said the interurban line was back behind somewhere between the backyards of some houses and some old board fences, and that King's Highway was a block or two away.

He did not say that King's Highway had not been a street in those days but a kind of road that wound from magic out of some dim and haunted land, and that along the way it had got mixed in with Tom the Piper's son, with hot cross buns, with all the light that came and went, and with coming down through Indiana in the morning, and the smell of engine smoke, the Union Station, and most of all with voices lost and far and long ago that said "King's Highway."

He did not say these things about King's Highway because he looked about him and he saw what King's Highway was. All he could say was that the street was near King's Highway, and was on the corner, and that the interurban trolley line was close to there. He said it was a stone house, and that there were stone steps before it, and a strip of grass. He said he thought the house had had a turret at one corner, he could not be sure.

The man looked at him again, and said, "This is King's Highway, but I never heard of any street like that."

Eugene left him then, and went on till he found the place. And so at last he turned into the street, finding the place where the two corners met, the huddled block, the turret, and the steps, and paused a moment, looking back, as if the street were Time.

## *The Last Boy*

For a moment he stood there, waiting—for a word, and for a door to open, for the child to come. He waited but no words were spoken; no one came.

Yet all of it was just as it had always been, except that the steps were lower, the porch less high, the strip of grass less wide, than he had thought. All the rest of it was as he had known it would be. A graystone front, three-storied, with a slant slate roof, the side red brick and windowed, still with the old arched entrance in the center for the doctor's use.

There was a tree in front, and a lamp post; and behind and to the side, more trees than he had known there would be. And all the slatey turret gables, all the slatey window gables, going into points, and the two arched windows, in strong stone, in the front room.

It was all so strong, so solid, and so ugly—and all so enduring and so good, the way he had remembered it, except he did not smell the tar, the hot and caulky dryness of the old cracked ties, the boards of backyard fences and the coarse and sultry grass, and absence in the afternoon when the street car had gone, and the twins, sharp-visaged in their sailor suits, pumping with furious shrillness on tricycles up and down before the house, and the feel of the hot afternoon, and the sense that everyone was absent at the Fair.

Except for this, it all was just the same; except for this and for King's Highway, which was now a street; except for this, and for the child that did not come.

It was a hot day. Darkness had come. The heat rose up and hung and sweltered like a sodden blanket in St. Louis. It was wet heat, and one knew that there would be no relief or coolness in the night. And when one tried to think of the time when the heat would go away, one said: "It can-

not last. It's bound to go away," as we always say it in America. But one did not believe it when he said it. The heat soaked down and men sweltered in it; the faces of the people were pale and greasy with the heat. And in their faces was a patient wretchedness, and one felt the kind of desolation that one feels at the end of a hot day in a great city in America—when one's home is far away, across the continent, and he thinks of all that distance, all that heat, and feels, "Oh God! but it's a big country!"

And he feels nothing but absence, absence, and the desolation of America, the loneliness and sadness of the high, hot skies, and evening coming on across the Middle West, across the sweltering and heat-sunken land, across all the lonely little towns, the farms, the fields, the oven swelter of Ohio, Kansas, Iowa, and Indiana at the close of day, and voices, casual in the heat, voices at the little stations, quiet, casual, somehow faded into that enormous vacancy and weariness of heat, of space, and of the immense, the sorrowful, the most high and awful skies.

Then he hears the engine and the wheel again, the wailing whistle and the bell, the sound of shifting in the sweltering yard, and walks the street, and walks the street, beneath the clusters of hard lights, and by the people with sagged faces, and is drowned in desolation and in no belief.

He feels the way one feels when one comes back, and knows that he should not have come, and when he sees that, after all, King's Highway is—a street; and St. Louis—the enchanted name—a big, hot, common town upon the river, sweltering in wet, dreary heat, and not quite South, and nothing else enough to make it better.

It had not been like this before. He could remember how it would get hot,

### *Coming-of-Age in Our Time*

and how good the heat was, and how he would lie out in the backyard on an airing mattress, and how the mattress would get hot and dry and smell like a hot mattress full of sun, and how the sun would make him want to sleep, and how, sometimes, he would go down into the basement to feel coolness, and how the cellar smelled as cellars always smell—a cool, stale smell, the smell of cobwebs and of grimy bottles. And he could remember, when you opened the door upstairs, the smell of the cellar would come up to you—cool, musty, stale and dank and dark—and how the thought of the dark cellar always filled him with a kind of numb excitement, a kind of visceral expectancy.

He could remember how it got hot in the afternoons, and how he would feel a sense of absence and vague sadness in the afternoons, when everyone had gone away. The house would seem so lonely, and sometimes he would sit inside, on the second step of the hall stairs, and listen to the sound of silence and of absence in the afternoon. He could smell the oil upon the floor and on the stairs, and see the sliding doors with their brown varnish and the beady chains across the door, and thrust his hands among the beady chains, and gather them together in his arms, and let them clash, and swish with light beady swishings all around him. He could feel darkness, absence, varnished darkness, and stained light within the house, through the stained glass of the window on the stairs, through the small stained glasses by the door, stained light and absence, silence and the smell of floor oil and vague sadness in the house on a hot mid-afternoon. And all these things themselves would have a kind of life: would seem to wait attentively, to be most living and most still.

He would sit there and listen. He could hear the girl next door practice her piano

lessons in the afternoon, and hear the street car coming by between the backyard fences, half a block away, and smell the dry and sultry smell of backyard fences, the smell of coarse hot grasses by the car tracks in the afternoon, the smell of tar, of dry caulked ties, the smell of bright worn flanges, and feel the loneliness of backyards in the afternoon and the sense of absence when the car was gone.

Then he would long for evening and return, the slant of light, and feet along the street, the sharp-faced twins in sailor suits upon their tricycles, the smell of supper and the sound of voices in the house again, and Grover coming from the Fair.

That is how it was when he came into the street, and found the place where the two corners met, and turned at last to see if Time was there. He passed the house: some lights were burning, the door was open, and a woman sat upon the porch. And presently he turned, came back, and stopped before the house again. The corner light fell blank upon the house. He stood looking at it, and put his foot upon the step.

Then he said to the woman who was sitting on the porch: "This house—excuse me—but could you tell me, please, who lives here in this house?"

He knew his words were strange and hollow, and he had not said what he wished to say. She stared at him a moment, puzzled.

Then she said: "I live here. Who are you looking for?"

He said, "Why, I am looking for—"

And then he stopped, because he knew he could not tell her what it was that he was looking for.

"There used to be a house—" he said.

The woman was now staring at him hard.

He said, "I think I used to live here."

She said nothing.

In a moment he continued, "I used to live here in this house," he said, "when I was a little boy."

She was silent, looking at him, then she said: "Oh. Are you sure this was the house? Do you remember the address?"

"I have forgotten the address," he said, "but it was Edgemont Street, and it was on the corner. And I know this is the house."

"This isn't Edgemont Street," the woman said. "The name is Bates."

"Well, then, they changed the name of the street," he said, "but this is the same house. It hasn't changed."

She was silent a moment, then she nodded: "Yes. They did change the name of the street. I remember when I was a child they called it something else," she said. "But that was a long time ago. When was it that you lived here?"

"In 1904."

Again she was silent, looking at him. Then presently: "Oh. That was the year of the Fair. You were here then?"

"Yes." He now spoke rapidly, with more confidence. "My mother had the house, and we were here for seven months. And the house belonged to Dr. Packer," he went on. "We rented it from him."

"Yes," the woman said, and nodded, "this was Dr. Packer's house. He's dead now, he's been dead for many years. But this was the Packer house, all right."

"That entrance on the side," he said, "where the steps go up, that was for Dr. Packer's patients. That was the entrance to his office."

"Oh," the woman said, "I didn't know that. I've often wondered what it was. I didn't know what it was for."

"And this big room in front here," he continued, "that was the office. And there

were sliding doors, and next to it, a kind of alcove for his patients—"

"Yes, the alcove is still there, only all of it has been made into one room now—and I never knew just what the alcove was for."

"And there were sliding doors on this side, too, that opened on the hall—and a stairway going up upon this side. And halfway up the stairway, at the landing, a little window of colored glass—and across the sliding doors here in the hall, a kind of curtain made of strings of beads."

She nodded, smiling. "Yes, it's just the same—we still have the sliding doors and the stained glass window on the stairs. There's no bead curtain any more," she said, "but I remember when people had them. I know what you mean."

"When we were here," he said, "we used the doctor's office for a parlor—except later on—the last month or two—and then we used it for—a bedroom."

"It is a bedroom now," she said. "I run the house—I rent rooms—all of the rooms upstairs are rented—but I have two brothers and they sleep in this front room."

Both of them were silent for a moment, then Eugene said, "My brother stayed there too."

"In the front room?" the woman said.

He answered, "Yes."

She paused, then said: "Won't you come in? I don't believe it's changed much. Would you like to see?"

He thanked her and said he would, and he went up the steps. She opened the screen door to let him in.

Inside it was just the same—the stairs, the hallway, the sliding doors, the window of stained glass upon the stairs. And all of it was just the same, except for absence, the stained light of absence in the afternoon, and the child who once had sat there, waiting on the stairs.



## *Coming-of-Age in Our Time*

It was all the same except that as a child he had sat there feeling things were *Some-where*—and now he *knew*. He had sat there feeling that a vast and sultry river was somewhere—and now he knew! He had sat there wondering what King's Highway was, where it began, and where it ended—now he knew! He had sat there haunted by the magic word “downtown”—now he knew!—and by the street car, after it had gone—and by all things that came and went and came again, like the cloud shadows passing in a wood, that never could be captured.

And he felt that if he could only sit there on the stairs once more, in solitude and absence in the afternoon, he would be able to get it back again. Then would he be able to remember all that he had seen and been—the brief sum of himself, the universe of his four years, with all the light of Time upon it—that universe which was so short to measure, and yet so far, so endless, to remember. Then would he be able to see his own small face again, pooled in the dark mirror of the hall, and peer once more into the grave eyes of the child that he had been, and discover there in his quiet three-years' self the lone integrity of “I,” knowing: “Here is the House,—and here House listening; here is Absence, Absence in the afternoon; and here in this House, this Absence, is my core, my kernel—here am I!”

But as he thought it, he knew that even if he could sit here alone and get it back again, it would be gone as soon as seized, just as it had been then—first coming like the vast and drowsy rumors of the distant and enchanted Fair, then fading like cloud shadows on a hill, going like faces in a dream—coming, going, coming, possessed and held but never captured, like lost voices in the mountains long ago—and like the dark eyes and quiet face of the

dark, lost boy, his brother, who, in the mysterious rhythms of his life and work, used to come into this house, then go, and return again.

The woman took Eugene back into the house and through the hall. He told her of the pantry, told her where it was and pointed to the place, but now it was no longer there. And he told her of the backyard, and of the old board fence around the yard. But the old board fence was gone. And he told her of the carriage house, and told her it was painted red. But now there was a small garage. And the backyard was still there, but smaller than he thought, and now there was a tree.

“I did not know there was a tree,” he said. “I do not remember any tree.”

“Perhaps it was not there,” she said. “A tree could grow in thirty years.” And then they came back through the house again and paused at the sliding doors.

“And could I see this room?” he said.

She slid the doors back. They slid open smoothly, with a rolling heaviness, as they used to do. And then he saw the room again. It was the same. There was a window at the side, the two arched windows at the front, the alcove and the sliding doors, the fireplace with the tiles of mottled green, the mantel of dark mission wood, the mantel posts, a dresser and a bed, just where the dresser and the bed had been so long ago.

“Is this the room?” the woman said. “It hasn't changed?”

He told her that it was the same.

“And your brother slept here where my brothers sleep?”

“This is his room,” he said.

They were silent. He turned to go, and said, “Well, thank you. I appreciate your showing me.”

## *The Lost Boy*

She said that she was glad and that it was no trouble. "And when you see your family, you can tell them that you saw the house," she said. "My name is Mrs. Bell. You can tell your mother that a Mrs. Bell has the house now. And when you see your brother, you can tell him that you saw the room he slept in, and that you found it just the same."

He told her then that his brother was dead.

The woman was silent for a moment. Then she looked at him and said: "He died here, didn't he? In this room?"

He told her that it was so.

"Well, then," she said, "I knew it. I don't know how. But when you told me he was here, I knew it."

He said nothing. In a moment the woman said, "What did he die of?"

"Typhoid."

She looked shocked and troubled, and said involuntarily, "My two brothers—"

"That was a long time ago," he said. "I don't think you need to worry now."

"Oh, I wasn't thinking about that," she said. "It was just hearing that a little boy—your brother—was—was in this room that my two brothers sleep in now—"

"Well, maybe I shouldn't have told you then. But he was a good boy—and if you'd known him you wouldn't mind."

She said nothing, and he added quickly: "Besides, he didn't stay here long. This wasn't really his room—but the night he came back with my sister he was so sick—they didn't move him."

"Oh," the woman said, "I see." And then: "Are you going to tell your mother you were here?"

"I don't think so."

"I—I wonder how she feels about this room."

"I don't know. She never speaks of it."

"Oh. . . . How old was he?"

"He was twelve."

"You must have been pretty young yourself."

"I was not quite four."

"And—you just wanted to see the room, didn't you? That's why you came back."

"Yes."

"Well—" indefinitely—"I guess you've seen it now."

"Yes, thank you."

"I guess you don't remember much about him, do you? I shouldn't think you would."

"No, not much."

The years dropped off like fallen leaves: the face came back again—the soft dark oval, the dark eyes, the soft brown berry on the neck, the raven hair, all bending down, approaching—the whole appearing to him ghostwise, intent and instant.

"Now say it—*Grover!*"

"Gova."

"No—not Gova.—*Grover!* . . . Say it!"

"Gova."

"Ah-h—you didn't say it. You said Gova. *Grover*—now say it!"

"Gova."

"Look, I tell you what I'll do if you say it right. Would you like to go down to King's Highway? Would you like Grover to set you up? All right, then. If you say Grover and say it right, I'll take you to King's Highway and set you up to ice cream. Now say it right—*Grover!*"

"Gova."

"Ah-h, you-u. You're the craziest little old boy I ever did see. Can't you even say Grover?"

"Gova."

"Ah-h, you-u. Old Tongue-Tie, that's what you are. . . . Well, come on, then, I'll set you up anyway."

It all came back, and faded, and was

## *Coming-of-Age in Our Time*

lost again. Eugene turned to go, and thanked the woman and said good-by.

"Well, then, good-by," the woman said, and they shook hands. "I'm glad if I could show you. I'm glad if—" She did not finish, and at length she said: "Well, then, that was a long time ago. You'll find everything changed now, I guess. It's all built up around here now—and way out beyond here, out beyond where the Fair Grounds used to be. I guess you'll find it changed."

They had nothing more to say. They just stood there for a moment on the steps, and then shook hands once more.

"Well, good-by."

And again he was in the street, and found the place where the corners met,

and for the last time turned to see where Time had gone.

And he knew that he would never come again, and that lost magic would not come again. Lost now was all of it—the street, the heat, King's Highway, and Tom the Piper's son, all mixed in with the vast and drowsy murmur of the Fair, and with the sense of absence in the afternoon, and the house that waited, and the child that dreamed. And out of the enchanted wood, that thicket of man's memory, Eugene knew that the dark eye and the quiet face of his friend and brother—poor child, life's stranger, and life's exile, lost like all of us, a cipher in blind mazes, long ago—the lost boy was gone forever, and would not return.

## THE BEAR

by WILLIAM FAULKNER

HE WAS TEN. But it had already begun, long before that day when at last he wrote his age in two figures and he saw for the first time the camp where his father and Major de Spain and old General Compson and the others spent two weeks each November and two weeks again each June. He had already inherited then, without ever having seen it, the tremendous bear with one trap-ruined foot which, in an area almost a hundred miles deep, had earned for itself a name, a definite designation like a living man.

He had listened to it for years: the long legend of corncribs rifled, of shotes and grown pigs and even calves carried bodily into the woods and devoured, of traps and deadfalls overthrown and dogs mangled and slain, and shotgun and even rifle

charges delivered at point-blank range and with no more effect than so many peas blown through a tube by a boy—a corridor of wreckage and destruction beginning back before he was born, through which sped, not fast but rather with the ruthless and irresistible deliberation of a locomotive, the shaggy tremendous shape.

It ran in his knowledge before he ever saw it. It looked and towered in his dreams before he even saw the unaxed woods where it left its crooked print, shaggy, huge, red-eyed, not malevolent but just big—too big for the dogs which tried to bay it, for the horses which tried to ride it down, for the men and the bullets they fired into it, too big for the very country which was its constricting scope. He seemed to see it entire with a

From William Faulkner, *Go Down, Moses*. Copyright, 1942, by William Faulkner. Reprinted by permission of Random House, Inc.

## *The Bear*

child's complete divination before he ever laid eyes on either—the doomed wilderness whose edges were being constantly and punily gnawed at by men with axes and plows who feared it because it was wilderness, men myriad and nameless even to one another in the land where the old bear had earned a name, through which ran not even a mortal animal but an anachronism, indomitable and invincible, out of an old dead time, a phantom, epitome and apotheosis of the old wild life at which the puny humans swarmed and hacked in a fury of abhorrence and fear, like pygmies about the ankles of a drowsing elephant; the old bear solitary, indomitable and alone, widowed, childless and absolved of mortality—old Priam reft of his old wife and having outlived all his sons.

Until he was ten, each November he would watch the wagon containing the dogs and the bedding and food and guns and his father and Tennie's Jim, the Negro, and Sam Fathers, the Indian, son of a slave woman and a Chickasaw chief, depart on the road to town, to Jefferson, where Major de Spain and the others would join them. To the boy, at seven and eight and nine, they were not going into the Big Bottom to hunt bear and deer, but to keep yearly rendezvous with the bear which they did not even intend to kill. Two weeks later they would return, with no trophy, no head and skin. He had not expected it. He had not even been afraid it would be in the wagon. He believed that even after he was ten and his father would let him go too, for those two November weeks, he would merely make another one, along with his father and Major de Spain and General Compson and the others, the dogs which feared to bay it and the rifles and shotguns which

failed even to bleed it, in the yearly pageant of the old bear's furious immortality.

Then he heard the dogs. It was in the second week of his first time in the camp. He stood with Sam Fathers against a big oak beside the faint crossing where they had stood each dawn for nine days now, hearing the dogs. He had heard them once before, one morning last week—a murmur, sourceless, echoing through the wet woods, swelling presently into separate voices which he could recognize and call by name. He had raised and cocked the gun as Sam told him and stood motionless again while the uproar, the invisible course, swept up and past and faded; it seemed to him that he could actually see the deer, the buck, blond, smoke-colored, elongated with speed, fleeing, vanishing, the woods, the gray solitude, still ringing even when the cries of the dogs had died away.

"Now let the hammers down," Sam said.

"You knew they were not coming here too," he said.

"Yes," Sam said. "I want you to learn how to do when you didn't shoot. It's after the chance for the bear or the deer has done already come and gone that men and dogs get killed."

"Anyway," he said, "it was just a deer."

Then on the tenth morning he heard the dogs again. And he readied the too-long, too-heavy gun as Sam had taught him, before Sam even spoke. But this time it was no deer, no ringing chorus of dogs running strong on a free scent, but a moiling yapping an octave too high, with something more than indecision and even abjectness in it, not even moving very fast, taking a long time to pass completely out of hearing, leaving even then somewhere

## *Coming-of-Age in Our Time*

in the air that echo, thin, slightly hysterical, abject, almost grieving, with no sense of a fleeing, unseen, smoke-colored, grass-eating shape ahead of it, and Sam, who had taught him first of all to cock the gun and take position where he could see everywhere and then never move again, had himself moved up beside him; he could hear Sam breathing at his shoulder and he could see the arched curve of the old man's inhaling nostrils.

"Hah," Sam said. "Not even running. Walking."

"Old Ben!" the boy said. "But up here!" he cried. "Way up here!"

"He do it every year," Sam said. "Once. Maybe to see who in camp this time, if he can shoot or not. Whether we got the dog yet that can bay and hold him. He'll take them to the river, then he'll send them back home. We may as well go back, too; see how they look when they come back to camp."

When they reached the camp the hounds were already there, ten of them crouching back under the kitchen, the boy and Sam squatting to peer back into the obscurity where they huddled, quiet, the eyes luminous, glowing at them and vanishing, and no sound, only that effluvium of something more than dog, stronger than dog and not just animal, just beast, because still there had been nothing in front of that abject and almost painful yapping save the solitude, the wilderness, so that when the eleventh hound came in at noon and with all the others watching—even old Uncle Ash, who called himself first a cook—Sam daubed the tattered ear and the raked shoulder with turpentine and axle grease, to the boy it was still no living creature, but the wilderness which, leaning for the moment down, had patted lightly once the hound's temerity.

"Just like a man," Sam said. "Just like folks. Put off as long as she could having to be brave, knowing all the time that sooner or later she would have to be brave once to keep on living with herself, and knowing all the time beforehand what was going to happen to her when she done it."

That afternoon, himself on the one-eyed wagon mule which did not mind the smell of blood nor, as they told him, of bear, and with Sam on the other one, they rode for more than three hours through the rapid, shortening winter day. They followed no path, no trail even that he could see; almost at once they were in a country which he had never seen before. Then he knew why Sam had made him ride the mule which would not spook. The sound one stopped short and tried to whirl and bolt even as Sam got down, blowing its breath, jerking and wrenching at the rein while Sam held it, coaxing it forward with his voice, since he could not risk tying it, drawing it forward while the boy got down from the marred one.

Then, standing beside Sam in the gloom of the dying afternoon, he looked down at the rotted overturned log, gutted and scored with claw marks and, in the wet earth beside it, the print of the enormous warped two-toed foot. He knew now what he had smelled when he peered under the kitchen where the dogs huddled. He realized for the first time that the bear which had run in his listening and loomed in his dreams since before he could remember to the contrary, and which, therefore, must have existed in the listening and dreams of his father and Major de Spain and even old General Compson, too, before they began to remember in their turn, was a mortal animal, and that if they had departed for the camp each Novem-

ber without any actual hope of bringing its trophy back, it was not because it could not be slain, but because so far they had had no actual hope to.

"Tomorrow," he said.

"We'll try tomorrow," Sam said. "We ain't got the dog yet."

"We've got eleven. They ran him this morning."

"It won't need but one," Sam said. "He ain't here. Maybe he ain't nowhere. The only other way will be for him to run by accident over somebody that has a gun."

"That wouldn't be me," the boy said. "It will be Walter or Major or—"

"It might," Sam said. "You watch close in the morning. Because he's smart. That's how come he has lived this long. If he gets hemmed up and has to pick out somebody to run over, he will pick out you."

"How?" the boy said. "How will he know—" He ceased. "You mean he already knows me, that I ain't never been here before, ain't had time to find out yet whether I—" He ceased again, looking at Sam, the old man whose face revealed nothing until it smiled. He said humbly, not even amazed, "It was me he was watching. I don't reckon he did need to come but once."

The next morning they left the camp three hours before daylight. They rode this time because it was too far to walk, even the dogs in the wagon; again the first gray light found him in a place which he had never seen before, where Sam had placed him and told him to stay and then departed. With the gun which was too big for him, which did not even belong to him, but to Major de Spain, and which he had fired only once—at a stump on the first day, to learn the recoil and how to reload it—he stood against a gum tree beside a little bayou whose black still water

crept without movement out of a cane-brake and crossed a small clearing and into cane again, where, invisible, a bird—the big woodpecker called Lord-to-God by Negroes—clattered at a dead limb.

It was a stand like any other, dissimilar only in incidentals to the one where he had stood each morning for ten days; a territory new to him, yet no less familiar than that other one which, after almost two weeks, he had come to believe he knew a little—the same solitude, the same loneliness through which human beings had merely passed without altering it, leaving no mark, no scar, which looked exactly as it must have looked when the first ancestor of Sam Fathers' Chickasaw predecessors crept into it and looked about, club or stone ax or bone arrow drawn and poised; different only because, squatting at the edge of the kitchen, he smelled the hounds huddled and cringing beneath it and saw the raked ear and shoulder of the one who, Sam said, had had to be brave once in order to live with herself, and saw yesterday in the earth beside the gutted log the print of the living foot.

He heard no dogs at all. He never did hear them. He only heard the drumming of the woodpecker stop short off and knew that the bear was looking at him. He never saw it. He did not know whether it was in front of him or behind him. He did not move, holding the useless gun, which he had not even had warning to cock and which even now he did not cock, tasting in his saliva that taint as of brass which he knew now because he had smelled it when he peered under the kitchen at the huddled dogs.

Then it was gone. As abruptly as it had ceased, the woodpecker's dry, monotonous clatter set up again, and after a while he even believed he could hear the dogs—a

## *Coming-of-Age in Our Time*

murmur, scarce a sound even, which he had probably been hearing for some time before he even remarked it, drifting into hearing and then out again, dying away. They came nowhere near him. If it was a bear they ran, it was another bear. It was Sam himself who came out of the cane and crossed the bayou, followed by the injured bitch of yesterday. She was almost at heel, like a bird dog, making no sound. She came and crouched against his leg, trembling, staring off into the cane.

"I didn't see him," he said. "I didn't, Sam!"

"I know it," Sam said. "He done the looking. You didn't hear him neither, did you?"

"No," the boy said. "I—"

"He's smart," Sam said. "Too smart." He looked down at the hound, trembling faintly and steadily against the boy's knee. From the raked shoulder a few drops of fresh blood oozed and clung. "Too big. We ain't got the dog yet. But maybe someday. Maybe not next time. But someday."

*So I must see him, he thought. I must look at him.* Otherwise, it seemed to him that it would go on like this forever, as it had gone on with his father and Major de Spain, who was older than his father, and even with old General Compson, who had been old enough to be a brigade commander in 1865. Otherwise, it would go on so forever, next time and next time, after and after and after. It seemed to him that he could see the two of them, himself and the bear, shadowy in the limbo from which time emerged, becoming time; the old bear absolved of mortality and himself partaking, sharing a little of it, enough of it. And he knew now what he had smelled in the huddled dogs and tasted in his saliva. He recognized fear.

*So I will have to see him, he thought, without dread or even hope. I will have to look at him.*

It was in June of the next year. He was eleven. They were in camp again, celebrating Major de Spain's and General Compson's birthdays. Although the one had been born in September and the other in the depth of winter and in another decade, they had met for two weeks to fish and shoot squirrels and turkey and run coons and wildcats with the dogs at night. That is, he and Boon Hoggenbeck and the Negroes fished and shot squirrels and ran the coons and cats, because the proved hunters, not only Major de Spain and old General Compson, who spent those two weeks sitting in a rocking chair before a tremendous iron pot of Brunswick stew, stirring and tasting, with old Ash to quarrel with about how he was making it and Tennie's Jim to pour whisky from the demijohn into the tin-dipper from which he drank it, but even the boy's father and Walter Ewell, who were still young enough, scorned such, other than shooting the wild gobblers with pistols for wagers on their marksmanship.

Or, that is, his father and the others believed he was hunting squirrels. Until the third day he thought that Sam Fathers believed that too. Each morning he would leave the camp right after breakfast. He had his own gun now, a Christmas present. He went back to the tree beside the little bayou where he had stood that morning. Using the compass which old General Compson had given him, he ranged from that point; he was teaching himself to be a better-than-fair woodsman without knowing he was doing it. On the second day he even found the gutted log where he had first seen the crooked print. It was almost completely crumbled now,

healing with unbelievable speed, a passionate and almost visible relinquishment, back into the earth from which the tree had grown.

He ranged the summer woods now, green with gloom; if anything, actually dimmer than in November's gray dissolution, where, even at noon, the sun fell only in intermittent dappling upon the earth, which never completely dried out and which crawled with snakes—moccasins and water snakes and rattlers, themselves the color of the dappled gloom, so that he would not always see them until they moved, returning later and later, first day, second day, passing in the twilight of the third evening the little log pen enclosing the log stable where Sam was putting up the horses for the night.

"You ain't looked right yet," Sam said.

He stopped. For a moment he didn't answer. Then he said peacefully, in a peaceful rushing burst as when a boy's miniature dam in a little brook gives way, "All right. But how? I went to the bayou. I even found that log again. I—"

"I reckon that was all right. Likely he's been watching you. You never saw his foot?"

"I," the boy said—"I didn't—I never thought—"

"It's the gun," Sam said. He stood beside the fence, motionless—the old man, the Indian, in the battered faded overalls and the frayed five-cent straw hat which in the Negro's race had been the badge of his enslavement and was now the regalia of his freedom. The camp—the clearing, the house, the barn and its tiny lot with which Major de Spain in his turn had scratched punily and evanescently at the wilderness—faded in the dusk, back into the immemorial darkness of the woods. *The gun*, the boy thought. *The gun*.

"Be scared," Sam said. "You can't help that. But don't be afraid. Ain't nothing in the woods going to hurt you unless you corner it, or it smells that you are afraid. A bear or a deer, too, has got to be scared of a coward the same as a brave man has got to be."

*The gun*, the boy thought.

"You will have to choose," Sam said.

He left the camp before daylight, long before Uncle Ash would wake in his quilts on the kitchen floor and start the fire for breakfast. He had only the compass and a stick for snakes. He could go almost a mile before he would begin to need the compass. He sat on a log, the invisible compass in his invisible hand, while the secret night sounds, fallen still at his movements, scurried again and then ceased for good, and the owls ceased and gave over to the waking of day birds, and he could see the compass. Then he went fast yet still quietly; he was becoming better and better as a woodsman, still without having yet realized it.

He jumped a doe and a fawn at sunrise, walked them out of the bed, close enough to see them—the crash of undergrowth, the white scut, the fawn scudding behind her faster than he had believed it could run. He was hunting right, upwind, as Sam had taught him; not that it mattered now. He had left the gun; of his own will and relinquishment he had accepted not a gambit, not a choice, but a condition in which not only the bear's heretofore inviolable anonymity but all the old rules and balances of hunter and hunted had been abrogated. He would not even be afraid, not even in the moment when the fear would take him completely—blood, skin, bowels, bones, memory from the long time before it became his memory—all save that thin, clear, quench-



## *Coming-of-Age in Our Time*

less, immortal lucidity which alone differed him from this bear and from all the other bear and deer he would ever kill in the humility and pride of his skill and endurance, to which Sam had spoken when he leaned in the twilight on the lot fence yesterday.

By noon he was far beyond the little bayou, farther into the new and alien country than he had ever been. He was traveling now not only by the compass but by the old, heavy, biscuit-thick silver watch which had belonged to his grandfather. When he stopped at last, it was for the first time since he had risen from the log at dawn when he could see the compass. It was far enough. He had left the camp nine hours ago; nine hours from now, dark would have already been an hour old. But he didn't think that. He thought, *All right. Yes. But what?* and stood for a moment, alien and small in the green and topless solitude, answering his own question before it had formed and ceased. It was the watch, the compass, the stick—the three lifeless mechanicals with which for nine hours he had fended the wilderness off; he hung the watch and compass carefully on a bush and leaned the stick beside them and relinquished completely to it.

He had not been going very fast for the last two or three hours. He went no faster now, since distance would not matter even if he could have gone fast. And he was trying to keep a bearing on the tree where he had left the compass, trying to complete a circle which would bring him back to it or at least intersect itself, since direction would not matter now either. But the tree was not there, and he did as Sam had schooled him—made the next circle in the opposite direction, so that the two patterns would bisect

somewhere, but crossing no print of his own feet, finding the tree at last, but in the wrong place—no bush, no compass, no watch—and the tree not even the tree, because there was a down log beside it and he did what Sam Fathers had told him was the next thing and the last.

As he sat down on the log he saw the crooked print—the warped, tremendous, two-toed indentation which, even as he watched it, filled with water. As he looked up, the wilderness coalesced, solidified—the glade, the tree he sought, the bush, the watch and the compass glinting where a ray of sunlight touched them. Then he saw the bear. It did not emerge, appear; it was just there, immobile, solid, fixed in the hot dappling of the green and windless noon, not as big as he had dreamed it, but as big as he had expected it, bigger, dimensionless against the dappled obscurity, looking at him where he sat quietly on the log and looked back at it.

Then it moved. It made no sound. It did not hurry. It crossed the glade, walking for an instant into the full glare of the sun; when it reached the other side it stopped again and looked back at him across one shoulder while his quiet breathing inhaled and exhaled three times.

Then it was gone. It didn't walk into the woods, the undergrowth. It faded, sank back into the wilderness as he had watched a fish, a huge old bass, sink and vanish back into the dark depths of its pool without even any movement of its fins.

He thought, *It will be next fall.* But it was not next fall, nor the next nor the next. He was fourteen then. He had killed his buck, and Sam Fathers had marked his face with the hot blood, and in the

## *The Bear*

next year he killed a bear. But even before that accolade he had become as competent in the woods as many grown men with the same experience; by his fourteenth year he was a better woodsman than most grown men with more. There was no territory within thirty miles of the camp that he did not know—bayou, ridge, brake, landmark tree and path. He could have led anyone to any point in it without deviation, and brought them out again. He knew game trails that even Sam Fathers did not know; in his thirteenth year he found a buck's bedding place, and unbeknown to his father he borrowed Walter Ewell's rifle and lay in wait at dawn and killed the buck when it walked back to the bed, as Sam had told him how the old Chickasaw fathers did.

But not the old bear, although by now he knew its footprint better than he did his own, and not only the crooked one. He could see any one of the three sound ones and distinguish it from any other, and not only by its size. There were other bears within those thirty miles which left tracks almost as large, but this was more than that. If Sam Fathers had been his mentor and the back-yard rabbits and squirrels at home his kindergarten, then the wilderness the old bear ran was his college, the old male bear itself, so long unwed and childless as to have become its own ungendered progenitor, was his alma mater. But he never saw it.

He could find the crooked print now almost whenever he liked, fifteen or ten or five miles, or sometimes nearer the camp than that. Twice while on stand during the three years he heard the dogs strike its trail by accident; on the second time they jumped it seemingly, the voices high, abject, almost human in hysteria, as on that first morning two years ago.

But not the bear itself. He would remember that noon three years ago, the glade, himself and the bear fixed during that moment in the windless and dappled blaze, and it would seem to him that it had never happened, that he had dreamed that too. But it had happened. They had looked at each other, they had emerged from the wilderness old as earth, synchronized to that instant by something more than the blood that moved the flesh and bones which bore them, and touched, pledged something, affirmed something more lasting than the frail web of bones and flesh which any accident could obliterate.

Then he saw it again. Because of the very fact that he thought of nothing else, he had forgotten to look for it. He was still-hunting with Walter Ewell's rifle. He saw it cross the end of a long blow-down, a corridor where a tornado had swept, rushing through rather than over the tangle of trunks and branches as a locomotive would have, faster than he had ever believed it could move, almost as fast as a deer even, because a deer would have spent most of that time in the air, faster than he could bring the rifle sights up to it, so that he believed the reason he never let off the shot was that he was still behind it, had never caught up with it. And now he knew what had been wrong during all the three years. He sat on a log, shaking and trembling as if he had never seen the woods before nor anything that ran them, wondering with incredulous amazement how he could have forgotten the very thing which Sam Fathers had told him and which the bear itself had proved the next day and had now returned after three years to reaffirm.

And he now knew what Sam Fathers had meant about the right dog, a dog in

## *Coming-of-Age in Our Time*

which size would mean less than nothing. So when he returned alone in April—school was out then, so that the sons of farmers could help with the land's planting, and at last his father had granted him permission, on his promise to be back in four days—he had the dog. It was his own, a mongrel of the sort called by Negroes a fyce, a ratter, itself not much bigger than a rat and possessing that bravery which had long since stopped being courage and had become foolhardiness.

It did not take four days. Alone again, he found the trail on the first morning. It was not a stalk; it was an ambush. He timed the meeting almost as if it were an appointment with a human being. Himself holding the fyce muffled in a feed sack and Sam Fathers with two of the hounds on a piece of plowline rope, they lay down wind of the trail at dawn of the second morning. They were so close that the bear turned without even running, as if in surprised amazement at the shrill and frantic uproar of the released fyce, turning at bay against the trunk of a tree, on its hind feet; it seemed to the boy that it would never stop rising, taller and taller, and even the two hounds seemed to take a sort of desperate and despairing courage from the fyce, following it as it went in.

Then he realized that the fyce was actually not going to stop. He flung, threw the gun away, and ran; when he overtook and grasped the frantically pinwheeling little dog, it seemed to him that he was directly under the bear.

He could smell it, strong and hot and rank. Sprawling, he looked up to where it loomed and towered over him like a cloudburst and colored like a thunderclap, quite familiar, peacefully and even lucidly familiar, until he remembered:

This was the way he had used to dream about it. Then it was gone. He didn't see it go. He knelt, holding the frantic fyce with both hands, hearing the abased wailing of the hounds drawing farther and farther away, until Sam came up. He carried the gun. He laid it down quietly beside the boy and stood looking down at him.

"You've done seed him twice now with a gun in your hands," he said. "This time you couldn't have missed him."

The boy rose. He still held the fyce. Even in his arms and clear of the ground, it yapped frantically, straining and surging after the fading uproar of the two hounds like a tangle of wire springs. He was panting a little, but he was neither shaking nor trembling now.

"Neither could you!" he said. "You had the gun! Neither did you!"

"And you didn't shoot," his father said. "How close were you?"

"I don't know, sir," he said. "There was a big wood tick inside his right hind leg. I saw that. But I didn't have the gun then."

"But you didn't shoot when you had the gun," his father said. "Why?"

But he didn't answer, and his father didn't wait for him to, rising and crossing the room, across the pelt of the bear which the boy had killed two years ago and the larger one which his father had killed before he was born, to the bookcase beneath the mounted head of the boy's first buck. It was the room which his father called the office, from which all the plantation business was transacted; in it for the fourteen years of his life he had heard the best of all talking. Major de Spain would be there and sometimes old General Compson, and Walter Ewell and Boon Hoggen-

beck and Sam Fathers and Tennie's Jim, too, because they, too, were hunters, knew the woods and what ran them.

He would hear it, not talking himself but listening—the wilderness, the big woods, bigger and older than any recorded document of white man fatuous enough to believe he had bought any fragment of it or Indian ruthless enough to pretend that any fragment of it had been his to convey. It was of the men, not white nor black nor red, but men, hunters with the will and hardihood to endure and the humility and skill to survive, and the dogs and the bear and deer juxtaposed and relieved against it, ordered and compelled by and within the wilderness in the ancient and unremitting contest by the ancient and immitigable rules which voided all regrets and brooked no quarter, the voices quiet and weighty and deliberate for retrospection and recollection and exact remembering, while he squatted in the blazing firelight as Tennie's Jim squatted, who stirred only to put more wood on the fire and to pass the bottle from one glass to another. Because the bottle was always present, so that after a while it seemed to him that those fierce instants of heart and brain and courage and wiliness and speed were concentrated and distilled into that brown liquor which not women, not boys and children, but only hunters drank, drinking not of the blood they had spilled but some condensation of the wild immortal spirit, drinking it moderately, humbly even, not with the pagan's base hope of acquiring thereby the virtues of cunning and strength and speed, but in salute to them.

His father returned with the book and sat down again and opened it. "Listen," he said. He read the five stanzas aloud, his voice quiet and deliberate in the room

where there was no fire now because it was already spring. Then he looked up. The boy watched him. "All right," his father said. "Listen." He read again, but only the second stanza this time, to the end of it, the last two lines, and closed the book and put it on the table beside him. "She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss, for ever wilt thou love, and she be fair," he said.

"He's talking about a girl," the boy said.

"He had to talk about something," his father said. Then he said, "He was talking about truth. Truth doesn't change. Truth is one thing. It covers all things which touch the heart—honor and pride and pity and justice and courage and love. Do you see now?"

He didn't know. Somehow it was simpler than that. There was an old bear, fierce and ruthless, not merely just to stay alive, but with the fierce pride of liberty and freedom, proud enough of that liberty and freedom to see it threatened without fear or even alarm; nay, who at times even seemed deliberately to put that freedom and liberty in jeopardy in order to savor them, to remind his old strong bones and flesh to keep supple and quick to defend and preserve them. There was an old man, son of a Negro slave and an Indian king, inheritor on the one side of the long chronicle of a people who had learned humility through suffering, and pride through the endurance which survived the suffering and injustice, and on the other side, the chronicle of a people even longer in the land than the first, yet who no longer existed in the land at all save in the solitary brotherhood of an old Negro's alien blood and the wild and invincible spirit of an old bear. There was a boy who wished to learn humility and pride in order to become skillful and

## *Coming-of-Age in Our Time*

worthy in the woods, who suddenly found himself becoming so skillful so rapidly that he feared he would never become worthy because he had not learned humility and pride, although he had tried to, until one day and as suddenly he discovered that an old man who could not have defined either had led him, as though by the hand, to that point where an old bear and a little mongrel dog showed him that, by possessing one thing other, he would possess them both.

And a little dog, nameless and mongrel and many-fathered, grown, yet weighing less than six pounds, saying as if to itself, "I can't be dangerous, because there's nothing much smaller than I am; I can't be fierce, because they would call it just noise; I can't be humble, because I'm already too close to the ground to genuflect; I can't be proud, because I wouldn't be near enough to it for anyone to know who was casting that shadow, and I don't even know that I'm not going to heaven, because they have already decided that I don't possess an immortal soul. So all I can be is brave. But it's all right. I can be that, even if they still call it just noise."

That was all. It was simple, much simpler than somebody talking in a book

about a youth and a girl he would never need to grieve over, because he could never approach any nearer her and would never have to get any farther away. He had heard about a bear, and finally got big enough to trail it, and he trailed it four years and at last met it with a gun in his hands and he didn't shoot. Because a little dog— But he could have shot long before the little dog covered the twenty yards to where the bear waited, and Sam Fathers could have shot at any time during that interminable minute while Old Ben stood on his hind feet over them. He stopped. His father was watching him gravely across the spring-rife twilight of the room; when he spoke, his words were as quiet as the twilight, too, not loud, because they did not need to be, because they would last: "Courage, and honor, and pride," his father said, "and pity, and love of justice and of liberty. They all touch the heart, and what the heart holds to becomes truth, as far as we know truth. Do you see now?"

*Sam, and Old Ben, and Nip*, he thought. And himself too. He had been all right too. His father had said so. "Yes, sir," he said.

## THE RED PONY

by JOHN STEINBECK

### *Part I. The Gift*

AT DAYBREAK Billy Buck emerged from the bunkhouse and stood for a moment on the porch looking up at the sky. He was a broad, bandy-legged little man with a walrus mustache, with square hands,

puffed and muscled on the palms. His eyes were a contemplative, watery gray and the hair which protruded from under his Stetson hat was spiky and weathered. Billy was still stuffing his shirt into his

From *The Long Valley* by John Steinbeck. Copyright, 1937, 1938 by John Steinbeck. By permission of The Viking Press, Inc., New York.

## *The Red Pony*

blue jeans as he stood on the porch. He unbuckled his belt and tightened it again. The belt showed, by the worn shiny places opposite each hole, the gradual increase of Billy's middle over a period of years. When he had seen to the weather, Billy cleared each nostril by holding its mate closed with his forefinger and blowing fiercely. Then he walked down to the barn, rubbing his hands together. He curried and brushed two saddle horses in the stalls, talking quietly to them all the time; and he had hardly finished when the iron triangle started ringing at the ranch house. Billy stuck the brush and currycomb together and laid them on the rail, and went up to breakfast. His action had been so deliberate and yet so wasteless of time that he came to the house while Mrs. Tifin was still ringing the triangle. She nodded her gray head to him and withdrew into the kitchen. Billy Buck sat down on the steps, because he was a cow-hand, and it wouldn't be fitting that he should go first into the dining-room. He heard Mr. Tifin in the house, stamping his feet into his boots.

The high jangling note of the triangle put the boy Jody in motion. He was only a little boy, ten years old, with hair like dusty yellow grass and with shy polite gray eyes, and with a mouth that worked when he thought. The triangle picked him up out of sleep. It didn't occur to him to disobey the harsh note. He never had: no one he knew ever had. He brushed the tangled hair out of his eyes and skinned his nightgown off. In a moment he was dressed—blue chambray shirt and overalls. It was late in the summer, so of course there were no shoes to bother with. In the kitchen he waited until his mother got from in front of the sink and went back to the stove. Then he washed himself and brushed back his wet hair with

his fingers. His mother turned sharply on him as he left the sink. Jody looked shyly away.

"I've got to cut your hair before long," his mother said. "Breakfast's on the table. Go on in, so Billy can come."

Jody sat at the long table which was covered with white oilcloth washed through to the fabric in some places. The fried eggs lay in rows on their platter. Jody took three eggs on his plate and followed with three thick slices of crisp bacon. He carefully scraped a spot of blood from one of the egg yolks.

Billy Buck clumped in. "That won't hurt you," Billy explained. "That's only a sign the rooster leaves."

Jody's tall stern father came in then and Jody knew from the noise on the floor that he was wearing boots, but he looked under the table anyway, to make sure. His father turned off the oil lamp over the table, for plenty of morning light now came through the windows.

Jody did not ask where his father and Billy Buck were riding that day, but he wished he might go along. His father was a disciplinarian. Jody obeyed him in everything without questions of any kind. Now, Carl Tifin sat down and reached for the egg platter.

"Got the cows ready to go, Billy?" he asked.

"In the lower corral," Billy said. "I could just as well take them in alone."

"Sure you could. But a man needs company. Besides your throat gets pretty dry." Carl Tifin was jovial this morning.

Jody's mother put her head in the door. "What time do you think to be back, Carl?"

"I can't tell. I've got to see some men in Salinas. Might be gone till dark."

The eggs and coffee and big biscuits disappeared rapidly. Jody followed the

### *Coming-of-Age in Our Time*

two men out of the house. He watched them mount their horses and drive six old milk cows out of the corral and start over the hill toward Salinas. They were going to sell the old cows to the butcher.

When they had disappeared over the crown of the ridge Jody walked up the hill in back of the house. The dogs trotted around the house corner hunching their shoulders and grinning horribly with pleasure. Jody patted their heads—Double-tree Mutt with the big thick tail and yellow eyes, and Smasher, the shepherd, who had killed a coyote and lost an ear in doing it. Smasher's one good ear stood up higher than a collie's ear should. Billy Buck said that always happened. After the frenzied greeting the dogs lowered their noses to the ground in a business-like way and went ahead, looking back now and then to make sure that the boy was coming. They walked up through the chicken yard and saw the quail eating with the chickens. Smasher chased the chickens a little to keep in practice in case there should ever be sheep to herd. Jody continued on through the large vegetable patch where the green corn was higher than his head. The cow-pumpkins were green and small yet. He went on to the sagebrush line where the cold spring ran out of its pipe and fell into a round wooden tub. He leaned over and drank close to the green mossy wood where the water tasted best. Then he turned and looked back on the ranch, on the low, whitewashed house girded with red geraniums, and on the long bunkhouse by the cypress tree where Billy Buck lived alone. Jody could see the great black kettle under the cypress tree. That was where the pigs were scalded. The sun was coming over the ridge now, glaring on the whitewash of the houses and barns,

making the wet grass blaze softly. Behind him, in the tall sagebrush, the birds were scampering on the ground, making a great noise among the dry leaves; the squirrels piped shrilly on the side-hills. Jody looked along at the farm buildings. He felt an uncertainty in the air, a feeling of change and of loss and of the gain of new and unfamiliar things. Over the hillside two big black buzzards sailed low to the ground and their shadows slipped smoothly and quickly ahead of them. Some animal had died in the vicinity. Jody knew it. It might be a cow or it might be the remains of a rabbit. The buzzards overlooked nothing. Jody hated them as all decent things hate them, but they could not be hurt because they made away with carrion.

After a while the boy sauntered down hill again. The dogs had long ago given him up and gone into the brush to do things in their own way. Back through the vegetable garden he went, and he paused for a moment to smash a green muskmelon with his heel, but he was not happy about it. It was a bad thing to do, he knew perfectly well. He kicked dirt over the ruined melon to conceal it.

Back at the house his mother bent over his rough hands, inspecting his fingers and nails. It did little good to start him clean to school for too many things could happen on the way. She sighed over the black cracks on his fingers, and then gave him his books and his lunch and started him on the mile walk to school. She noticed that his mouth was working a good deal this morning.

Jody started his journey. He filled his pockets with little pieces of white quartz that lay in the road, and every so often he took a shot at a bird or at some rabbit that had stayed sunning itself in the road

too long. At the crossroads over the bridge he met two friends and the three of them walked to school together, making ridiculous strides and being rather silly. School had just opened two weeks before. There was still a spirit of revolt among the pupils.

It was four o'clock in the afternoon when Jody topped the hill and looked down on the ranch again. He looked for the saddle horses, but the corral was empty. His father was not back yet. He went slowly, then, toward the afternoon chores. At the ranch house, he found his mother sitting on the porch, mending socks.

"There's two doughnuts in the kitchen for you," she said. Jody slid to the kitchen, and returned with half of one of the doughnuts already eaten and his mouth full. His mother asked him what he had learned in school that day, but she didn't listen to his doughnut-muffled answer. She interrupted, "Jody, tonight see you fill the wood-box clear full. Last night you crossed the sticks and it wasn't only about half full. Lay the sticks flat tonight. And Jody, some of the hens are hiding eggs, or else the dogs are eating them. Look about in the grass and see if you can find any nests."

Jody, still eating, went out and did his chores. He saw the quail come down to eat with the chickens when he threw out the grain. For some reason his father was proud to have them come. He never allowed any shooting near the house for fear the quail might go away.

When the wood-box was full, Jody took his twenty-two rifle up to the cold spring at the brush line. He drank again and then aimed the gun at all manner of things, at rocks, at birds on the wing, at the big black pig kettle under the cypress tree, but he didn't shoot for he had no

cartridges and wouldn't have until he was twelve. If his father had seen him aim the rifle in the direction of the house he would have put the cartridges off another year. Jody remembered this and did not point the rifle down the hill again. Two years was enough to wait for cartridges. Nearly all of his father's presents were given with reservations which hampered their value somewhat. It was good discipline.

The supper waited until dark for his father to return. When at last he came in with Billy Buck, Jody could smell the delicious brandy on their breaths. Inwardly he rejoiced, for his father sometimes talked to him when he smelled of brandy, sometimes even told things he had done in the wild days when he was a boy.

After supper, Jody sat by the fireplace and his shy polite eyes sought the room corners, and he waited for his father to tell what it was he contained, for Jody knew he had news of some sort. But he was disappointed. His father pointed a stern finger at him.

"You'd better go to bed, Jody. I'm going to need you in the morning."

That wasn't so bad. Jody liked to do the things he had to do as long as they weren't routine things. He looked at the floor and his mouth worked out a question before he spoke it. "What are we going to do in the morning, kill a pig?" he asked softly.

"Never you mind. You better get to bed."

When the door was closed behind him, Jody heard his father and Billy Buck chuckling and he knew it was a joke of some kind. And later, when he lay in bed, trying to make words out of the murmurs in the other room, he heard his father protest, "But, Ruth, I didn't give much for him."



## *Coming-of-Age in Our Time*

Jody heard the hoot-owls hunting mice down by the barn, and he heard a fruit tree limb tap-tapping against the house. A cow was lowing when he went to sleep.

When the triangle sounded in the morning, Jody dressed more quickly even than usual. In the kitchen, while he washed his face and combed back his hair, his mother addressed him irritably. "Don't you go out until you get a good breakfast in you."

He went into the dining-room and sat at the long white table. He took a steaming hotcake from the platter, arranged two fried eggs on it, covered them with another hotcake and squashed the whole thing with his fork.

His father and Billy Buck came in. Jody knew from the sound on the floor that both of them were wearing flat-heeled shoes, but he peered under the table to make sure. His father turned off the oil lamp, for the day had arrived, and he looked stern and disciplinary, but Billy Buck didn't look at Jody at all. He avoided the shy questioning eyes of the boy and soaked a whole piece of toast in his coffee.

Carl Tiflin said crossly, "You come with us after breakfast!"

Jody had trouble with his food then, for he felt a kind of doom in the air. After Billy had tilted his saucer and drained the coffee which had slopped into it, and had wiped his hands on his jeans, the two men stood up from the table and went out into the morning light together, and Jody respectfully followed a little behind them. He tried to keep his mind from running ahead, tried to keep it absolutely motionless.

His mother called, "Carl! Don't you let it keep him from school."

They marched past the cypress, where a

singletree hung from a limb to butcher the pigs on, and past the black iron kettle, so it was not a pig killing. The sun shone over the hill and threw long, dark shadows of the trees and buildings. They crossed a stubble-field to shortcut to the barn. Jody's father unhooked the door and they went in. They had been walking toward the sun on the way down. The barn was black as night in contrast and warm from the hay and from the beasts. Jody's father moved over toward the one box stall. "Come here!" he ordered. Jody could begin to see things now. He looked into the box stall and then stepped back quickly.

A red pony colt was looking at him out of the stall. Its tense ears were forward, and a light of disobedience was in its eyes. Its coat was rough and thick as an aire-dale's fur and its mane was long and tangled. Jody's throat collapsed in on itself and cut his breath short.

"He needs a good currying," his father said, "and if I ever hear of you not feeding him or leaving his stall dirty, I'll sell him off in a minute."

Jody couldn't bear to look at the pony's eyes any more. He gazed down at his hands for a moment, and he asked very shyly, "Mine?" No one answered him. He put his hand out toward the pony. Its gray nose came close, sniffing loudly, and then the lips drew back and the strong teeth closed on Jody's fingers. The pony shook its head up and down and seemed to laugh with amusement. Jody regarded his bruised fingers. "Well," he said with pride—"Well, I guess he can bite all right." The two men laughed, somewhat in relief. Carl Tiflin went out of the barn and walked up a side-hill to be by himself, for he was embarrassed, but Billy Buck

## *The Red Pony*

stayed. It was easier to talk to Billy Buck. Jody asked again—"Mine?"

Billy became professional in tone. "Sure! That is, if you look out for him and break him right. I'll show you how. He's just a colt. You can't ride him for some time."

Jody put out his bruised hand again, and this time the red pony let his nose be rubbed. "I ought to have a carrot," Jody said. "Where'd we get him, Billy?"

"Bought him at a sheriff's auction," Billy explained. "A show went broke in Salinas and had debts. The sheriff was selling off their stuff."

The pony stretched out his nose and shook the forelock from his wild eyes. Jody stroked the nose a little. He said softly, "There isn't a—saddle?"

Billy Buck laughed. "I'd forgot. Come along."

In the harness room he lifted down a little saddle of red morocco leather. "It's just a show saddle," Billy Buck said disparagingly. "It isn't practical for the brush, but it was cheap at the sale."

Jody couldn't trust himself to look at the saddle either, and he couldn't speak at all. He brushed the shining red leather with his fingertips, and after a long time he said, "It'll look pretty on him though." He thought of the grandest and prettiest things he knew. "If he hasn't a name already, I think I'll call him Gabilan Mountains," he said.

Billy Buck knew how he felt. "It's a pretty long name. Why don't you just call him Gabilan? That means hawk. That would be a fine name for him." Billy felt glad. "If you will collect tail hair, I might be able to make a hair rope for you sometime. You could use it for a hackamore."

Jody wanted to go back to the box stall. "Could I lead him to school, do you think—to show the kids?"

But Billy shook his head. "He's not even halter-broke yet. We had a time getting him here. Had to almost drag him. You better be starting for school though."

"I'll bring the kids to see him here this afternoon," Jody said.

Six boys came over the hill half an hour early that afternoon, running hard, their heads down, their forearms working, their breath whistling. They swept by the house and cut across the stubble-field to the barn. And then they stood self-consciously before the pony, and then they looked at Jody with eyes in which there was a new admiration and a new respect. Before today Jody had been a boy, dressed in overalls and a blue shirt—quieter than most, even suspected of being a little cowardly. And now he was different. Out of a thousand centuries they drew the ancient admiration of the footman for the horseman. They knew instinctively that a man on a horse is spiritually as well as physically bigger than a man on foot. They knew that Jody had been miraculously lifted out of equality with them, and had been placed over them. Gabilan put his head out of the stall and sniffed them.

"Why'n't you ride him?" the boys cried. "Why'n't you braid his tail with ribbons like in the fair?" "When you going to ride him?"

Jody's courage was up. He too felt the superiority of the horseman. "He's not old enough. Nobody can ride him for a long time. I'm going to train him on the long halter. Billy Buck is going to show me how."

"Well, can't we even lead him around a little?"

"He isn't even halter-broke," Jody said. He wanted to be completely alone when

### *Coming-of-Age in Our Time*

he took the pony out the first time. "Come and see the saddle."

They were speechless at the red morocco saddle, completely shocked out of comment. "It isn't much use in the brush," Jody explained. "It'll look pretty on him though. Maybe I'll ride bareback when I go into the brush."

"How you going to rope a cow without a saddle horn?"

"Maybe I'll get another saddle for every day. My father might want me to help him with the stock." He let them feel the red saddle, and showed them the brass chain throat-latch on the bridle and the big brass buttons at each temple where the headstall and brow band crossed. The whole thing was too wonderful. They had to go away after a little while, and each boy, in his mind, searched among his possessions for a bribe worthy of offering in return for a ride on the red pony when the time should come.

Jody was glad when they had gone. He took brush and currycomb from the wall, took down the barrier of the box stall and stepped cautiously in. The pony's eyes glittered, and he edged around into kicking position. But Jody touched him on the shoulder and rubbed his high arched neck as he had always seen Billy Buck do, and he crooned, "So-o-o Boy," in a deep voice. The pony gradually relaxed his tenseness. Jody curried and brushed until a pile of dead hair lay in the stall and until the pony's coat had taken on a deep red shine. Each time he finished he thought it might have been done better. He braided the mane into a dozen little pigtails, and he braided the forelock, and then he undid them and brushed the hair out straight again.

Jody did not hear his mother enter the barn. She was angry when she came, but

when she looked in at the pony and at Jody working over him, she felt a curious pride rise up in her. "Have you forgot the wood-box?" she asked gently. "It's not far off from dark and there's not a stick of wood in the house, and the chickens aren't fed."

Jody quickly put up his tools. "I forgot, ma'am."

"Well, after this do your chores first. Then you won't forget. I expect you'll forget lots of things now if I don't keep an eye on you."

"Can I have carrots from the garden for him, ma'am?"

She had to think about that. "Oh—I guess so, if you only take the big tough ones."

"Carrots keep the coat good," he said, and again she felt the curious rush of pride.

Jody never waited for the triangle to get him out of bed after the coming of the pony. It became his habit to creep out of bed even before his mother was awake, to slip into his clothes and to go quietly down to the barn to see Gabilan. In the gray quiet mornings when the land and the brush and the houses and the trees were silver-gray and black like a photograph negative, he stole toward the barn, past the sleeping stones and the sleeping cypress tree. The turkeys, roosting in the tree out of coyotes' reach, clicked drowsily. The fields glowed with a gray frost-like light and in the dew the tracks of rabbits and of field mice stood out sharply. The good dogs came stiffly out of their little houses, hackles up and deep growls in their throats. Then they caught Jody's scent, and their stiff tails rose up and waved a greeting—Doubletree Mutt with the big thick tail, and Smasher, the incip-

ient shepherd—then went lazily back to their warm beds.

It was a strange time and a mysterious journey, to Jody—an extension of a dream. When he first had the pony he liked to torture himself during the trip by thinking Gabilan would not be in his stall, and worse, would never have been there. And he had other delicious little self-induced pains. He thought how the rats had gnawed ragged holes in the red saddle, and how the mice had nibbled Gabilan's tail until it was stringy and thin. He usually ran the last little way to the barn. He unlatched the rusty hasp of the barn door and stepped in, and no matter how quietly he opened the door, Gabilan was always looking at him over the barrier of the box stall and Gabilan whinnied softly and stamped his front foot, and his eyes had big sparks of red fire in them like oak-wood embers.

Sometimes, if the work horses were to be used that day, Jody found Billy Buck in the barn harnessing and currying. Billy stood with him and looked long at Gabilan and he told Jody a great many things about horses. He explained that they were terribly afraid for their feet, so that one must make a practice of lifting the legs and patting the hooves and ankles to remove their terror. He told Jody how horses love conversation. He must talk to the pony all the time, and tell him the reasons for everything. Billy wasn't sure a horse could understand everything that was said to him, but it was impossible to say how much was understood. A horse never kicked up a fuss if someone he liked explained things to him. Billy could give examples, too. He had known, for instance, a horse nearly dead beat with fatigue to perk up when told it was only a little farther to his destination. And he

had known a horse paralyzed with fright to come out of it when his rider told him what it was that was frightening him. While he talked in the mornings, Billy Buck cut twenty or thirty straws into neat three-inch lengths and stuck them into his hatband. Then during the whole day, if he wanted to pick his teeth or merely to chew on something, he had only to reach up for one of them.

Jody listened carefully, for he knew and the whole country knew that Billy Buck was a fine hand with horses. Billy's own horse was a stringy cayuse with a hammer head, but he nearly always won the first prizes at the stock trials. Billy could rope a steer, take a double half-hitch about the horn with his riata, and dismount, and his horse would play the steer as an angler plays a fish, keeping a tight rope until the steer was down or beaten.

Every morning, after Jody had curried and brushed the pony, he let down the barrier of the stall, and Gabilan thrust past him and raced down the barn and into the corral. Around and around he galloped, and sometimes he jumped forward and landed on stiff legs. He stood quivering, stiff ears forward, eyes rolling so that the whites showed, pretending to be frightened. At last he walked snorting to the water-trough and buried his nose in the water up to the nostrils. Jody was proud then, for he knew that was the way to judge a horse. Poor horses only touched their lips to the water, but a fine spirited beast put his whole nose and mouth under, and only left room to breathe.

Then Jody stood and watched the pony, and he saw things he had never noticed about any other horse, the sleek, sliding flank muscles and the cords of the buttocks, which flexed like a closing fist, and the shine the sun put on the red coat. Hav-

## *Coming-of-Age in Our Time*

ing seen horses all his life, Jody had never looked at them very closely before. But now he noticed the moving ears which gave expression and even inflection of expression to the face. The pony talked with his ears. You could tell exactly how he felt about everything by the way his ears pointed. Sometimes they were stiff and upright and sometimes lax and sagging. They went back when he was angry or fearful, and forward when he was anxious and curious and pleased; and their exact position indicated which emotion he had.

Billy Buck kept his word. In the early fall the training began. First there was the halter-breaking, and that was the hardest because it was the first thing. Jody held a carrot and coaxed and promised and pulled on the rope. The pony set his feet like a burro when he felt the strain. But before long he learned. Jody walked all over the ranch leading him. Gradually he took to dropping the rope until the pony followed him unled wherever he went.

And then came the training on the long halter. That was slower work. Jody stood in the middle of a circle, holding the long halter. He clucked with his tongue and the pony started to walk in a big circle, held in by the long rope. He clucked again to make the pony trot, and again to make him gallop. Around and around Gabilan went thundering and enjoying it immensely. Then he called, "Whoa," and the pony stopped. It was not long until Gabilan was perfect at it. But in many ways he was a bad pony. He bit Jody in the pants and stomped on Jody's feet. Now and then his ears went back and he aimed a tremendous kick at the boy. Every time he did one of these bad things, Gabilan settled back and seemed to laugh to himself.

Billy Buck worked at the hair rope in the evenings before the fireplace. Jody collected tail hair in a bag, and he sat and watched Billy slowly constructing the rope, twisting a few hairs to make a string and rolling two strings together for a cord, and then braiding a number of cords to make the rope. Billy rolled the finished rope on the floor under his foot to make it round and hard.

The long halter work rapidly approached perfection. Jody's father, watching the pony stop and start and trot and gallop, was a little bothered by it.

"He's getting to be almost a trick pony," he complained. "I don't like trick horses. It takes all the—dignity out of a horse to make him do tricks. Why, a trick horse is kind of like an actor—no dignity, no character of his own." And his father said, "I guess you better be getting him used to the saddle pretty soon."

Jody rushed for the harness-room. For some time he had been riding the saddle on a sawhorse. He changed the stirrup length over and over, and could never get it just right. Sometimes, mounted on the sawhorse in the harness-room, with collars and hames and tugs hung all about him, Jody rode out beyond the room. He carried his rifle across the pommel. He saw the fields go flying by, and he heard the beat of the galloping hoofs.

It was a ticklish job, saddling the pony the first time. Gabilan hunched and reared and threw the saddle off before the cinch could be tightened. It had to be replaced again and again until at last the pony let it stay. And the cinching was difficult, too. Day by day Jody tightened the girth a little more until at last the pony didn't mind the saddle at all.

Then there was the bridle. Billy ex-

plained how to use a stick of licorice for a bit until Gabilan was used to having something in his mouth. Billy explained, "Of course we could force-break him to everything, but he wouldn't be as good a horse if we did. He'd always be a little bit afraid, and he wouldn't mind because he wanted to."

The first time the pony wore the bridle he whipped his head about and worked his tongue against the bit until the blood oozed from the corners of his mouth. He tried to rub the headstall off on the manger. His ears pivoted about and his eyes turned red with fear and with general rambunctiousness. Jody rejoiced, for he knew that only a mean-souled horse does not resent training.

And Jody trembled when he thought of the time when he would first sit in the saddle. The pony would probably throw him off. There was no disgrace in that. The disgrace would come if he did not get right up and mount again. Sometimes he dreamed that he lay in the dirt and cried and couldn't make himself mount again. The shame of the dream lasted until the middle of the day.

Gabilan was growing fast. Already he had lost the long-leggedness of the colt; his mane was getting longer and blacker. Under the constant currying and brushing his coat lay as smooth and gleaming as orange-red lacquer. Jody oiled the hoofs and kept them carefully trimmed so they would not crack.

The hair rope was nearly finished. Jody's father gave him an old pair of spurs and bent in the side bars and cut down the strap and took up the chainlets until they fitted. And then one day Carl Tifin said:

"The pony's growing faster than I thought. I guess you can ride him by Thanksgiving. Think you can stick on?"

"I don't know," Jody said shyly. Thanksgiving was only three weeks off. He hoped it wouldn't rain, for rain would spot the red saddle.

Gabilan knew and liked Jody by now. He nickered when Jody came across the stubble-field, and in the pasture he came running when his master whistled for him. There was always a carrot for him every time.

Billy Buck gave him riding instructions over and over. "Now when you get up there, just grab tight with your knees and keep your hands away from the saddle, and if you get throwed, don't let that stop you. No matter how good a man is, there's always some horse can pitch him. You just climb up again before he gets to feeling smart about it. Pretty soon, he won't throw you no more, and pretty soon he *can't* throw you no more. That's the way to do it."

"I hope it don't rain before," Jody said.

"Why not? Don't want to get throwed in the mud?"

That was partly it, and also he was afraid that in the flurry of bucking Gabilan might slip and fall on him and break his leg or his hip. He had seen that happen to men before, had seen how they writhed on the ground like squashed bugs, and he was afraid of it.

He practiced on the sawhorse how he would hold the reins in his left hand and a hat in his right hand. If he kept his hands thus busy, he couldn't grab the horn if he felt himself going off. He didn't like to think of what would happen if he did grab the horn. Perhaps his father and Billy Buck would never speak to him again, they would be so ashamed. The news would get about and his mother would be ashamed too. And in the school yard—it was too awful to contemplate.

## *Coming-of-Age in Our Time*

He began putting his weight in a stirrup when Gabilan was saddled, but he didn't throw his leg over the pony's back. That was forbidden until Thanksgiving.

Every afternoon he put the red saddle on the pony and cinched it tight. The pony was learning already to fill his stomach out unnaturally large while the cinching was going on, and then to let it down when the straps were fixed. Sometimes Jody led him up to the brush line and let him drink from the round green tub, and sometimes he led him up through the stubble-field to the hilltop from which it was possible to see the white town of Salinas and the geometric fields of the great valley, and the oak trees clipped by the sheep. Now and then they broke through the brush and came to little cleared circles so hedged in that the world was gone and only the sky and the circle of brush were left from the old life. Gabilan liked these trips and showed it by keeping his head very high and by quivering his nostrils with interest. When the two came back from an expedition they smelled of the sweet sage they had forced through.

Time dragged on toward Thanksgiving, but winter came fast. The clouds swept down and hung all day over the land and brushed the hilltops, and the winds blew shrilly at night. All day the dry oak leaves drifted down from the trees until they covered the ground, and yet the trees were unchanged.

Jody had wished it might not rain before Thanksgiving, but it did. The brown earth turned dark and the trees glistened. The cut ends of the stubble turned black with mildew; the haystacks grayed from exposure to the damp, and on the roofs the moss, which had been all summer as

gray as lizards, turned a brilliant yellow-green. During the week of rain, Jody kept the pony in the box stall out of the dampness, except for a little time after school when he took him out for exercise and to drink at the water-trough in the upper corral. Not once did Gabilan get wet.

The wet weather continued until little new grass appeared. Jody walked to school dressed in a slicker and short rubber boots. At length one morning the sun came out brightly. Jody, at his work in the box stall, said to Billy Buck, "Maybe I'll leave Gabilan in the corral when I go to school today."

"Be good for him to be out in the sun," Billy assured him. "No animal likes to be cooped up too long. Your father and me are going back on the hill to clean the leaves out of the spring." Billy nodded and picked his teeth with one of his little straws.

"If the rain comes, though—" Jody suggested.

"Not likely to rain today. She's rained herself out." Billy pulled up his sleeves and snapped his arm bands. "If it comes on to rain—why a little rain don't hurt a horse."

"Well, if it does come on to rain, you put him in, will you, Billy? I'm scared he might get cold so I couldn't ride him when the time comes."

"Oh sure! I'll watch out for him if we get back in time. But it won't rain today."

And so Jody, when he went to school left Gabilan standing out in the corral.

Billy Buck wasn't wrong about many things. He couldn't be. But he was wrong about the weather that day, for a little after noon the clouds pushed over the hills and the rain began to pour down. Jody heard it start on the schoolhouse roof. He considered holding up one finger for per-

## *The Red Pony*

mission to go to the outhouse and, once outside, running for home to put the pony in. Punishment would be prompt both at school and at home. He gave it up and took ease from Billy's assurance that rain couldn't hurt a horse. When school was finally out, he hurried home through the dark rain. The banks at the sides of the road spouted little jets of muddy water. The rain slanted and swirled under a cold and gusty wind. Jody dog-trotted home, slopping through the gravelly mud of the road.

From the top of the ridge he could see Gabilan standing miserably in the corral. The red coat was almost black, and streaked with water. He stood head down with his rump to the rain and wind. Jody arrived running and threw open the barn door and led the wet pony in by his forelock. Then he found a gunny sack and rubbed the soaked hair and rubbed the legs and ankles. Gabilan stood patiently, but he trembled in gusts like the wind.

When he had dried the pony as well as he could, Jody went up to the house and brought hot water down to the barn and soaked the grain in it. Gabilan was not very hungry. He nibbled at the hot mash, but he was not very much interested in it, and he still shivered now and then. A little steam rose from his damp back.

It was almost dark when Billy Buck and Carl Tiflin came home. "When the rain started we put up at Ben Herche's place, and the rain never let up all afternoon," Carl Tiflin explained. Jody looked reproachfully at Billy Buck and Billy felt guilty.

"You said it wouldn't rain," Jody accused him.

Billy looked away. "It's hard to tell, this time of year," he said, but his excuse was

lame. He had no right to be fallible, and he knew it.

"The pony got wet, got soaked through."

"Did you dry him off?"

"I rubbed him with a sack and I gave him hot grain."

Billy nodded in agreement.

"Do you think he'll take cold, Billy?"

"A little rain never hurt anything," Billy assured him.

Jody's father joined the conversation then and lectured the boy a little. "A horse," he said, "isn't any lap-dog kind of thing." Carl Tiflin hated weakness and sickness, and he held a violent contempt for helplessness.

Jody's mother put a platter of steaks on the table and boiled potatoes and boiled squash, which clouded the room with their steam. They sat down to eat. Carl Tiflin still grumbled about weakness put into animals and men by too much coddling.

Billy Buck felt bad about his mistake. "Did you blanket him?" he asked.

"No. I couldn't find any blanket. I laid some sacks over his back."

"We'll go down and cover him up after we eat, then." Billy felt better about it then. When Jody's father had gone in to the fire and his mother was washing dishes, Billy found and lighted a lantern. He and Jody walked through the mud to the barn. The barn was dark and warm and sweet. The horses still munched their evening hay. "You hold the lantern!" Billy ordered. And he felt the pony's legs and tested the heat of the flanks. He put his cheek against the pony's gray muzzle and then he rolled up the eyelids to look at the eyeballs and he lifted the lips to see the gums, and he put his fingers inside the ears. "He don't seem so chipper," Billy said. "I'll give him a rub-down."



## *Coming-of-Age in Our Time*

Then Billy found a sack and rubbed the pony's legs violently and he rubbed the chest and the withers. Gabilan was strangely spiritless. He submitted patiently to the rubbing. At last Billy brought an old cotton comforter from the saddle-room, and threw it over the pony's back and tied it at neck and chest with string.

"Now he'll be all right in the morning," Billy said.

Jody's mother looked up when he got back to the house. "You're late up from bed," she said. She held his chin in her hard hand and brushed the tangled hair out of his eyes and she said, "Don't worry about the pony. He'll be all right. Billy's as good as any horse doctor in the country."

Jody hadn't known she could see his worry. He pulled gently away from her and knelt down in front of the fireplace until it burned his stomach. He scorched himself through and then went in to bed, but it was a hard thing to go to sleep. He awakened after what seemed a long time. The room was dark but there was a grayness in the window like that which precedes the dawn. He got up and found his overalls and searched for the legs, and then the clock in the other room struck two. He laid his clothes down and got back into bed. It was broad daylight when he awakened again. For the first time he had slept through the ringing of the triangle. He leaped up, flung on his clothes and went out of the door still buttoning his shirt. His mother looked after him for a moment and then went quietly back to her work. Her eyes were brooding and kind. Now and then her mouth smiled a little but without changing her eyes at all.

Jody ran on toward the barn. Halfway there he heard the sound he dreaded, the

hollow rasping cough of a horse. He broke into a sprint then. In the barn he found Billy Buck with the pony. Billy was rubbing its legs with his strong thick hands. He looked up and smiled gaily. "He just took a little cold," Billy said. "We'll have him out of it in a couple of days."

Jody looked at the pony's face. The eyes were half closed and the lids thick and dry. In the eye corners a crust of hard mucus stuck. Gabilan's ears hung loosely sideways and his head was low. Jody put out his hand, but the pony did not move close to it. He coughed again and his whole body constricted with the effort. A little stream of thin fluid ran from his nostrils.

Jody looked back at Billy Buck. "He's awful sick, Billy."

"Just a little cold, like I said," Billy insisted. "You go get some breakfast and then go back to school. I'll take care of him."

"But you might have to do something else. You might leave him."

"No, I won't. I won't leave him at all. Tomorrow's Saturday. Then you can stay with him all day." Billy had failed again, and he felt badly about it. He had to cure the pony now.

Jody walked up to the house and took his place listlessly at the table. The eggs and bacon were cold and greasy, but he didn't notice it. He ate his usual amount. He didn't even ask to stay home from school. His mother pushed his hair back when she took his plate. "Billy'll take care of the pony," she assured him.

He moped through the whole day at school. He couldn't answer any questions nor read any words. He couldn't even tell anyone the pony was sick, for that might make him sicker. And when school was finally out he started home in dread. He

## *The Red Pony*

walked slowly and let the other boys leave him. He wished he might continue walking and never arrive at the ranch.

Billy was in the barn, as he had promised, and the pony was worse. His eyes were almost closed now, and his breath whistled shrilly past an obstruction in his nose. A film covered that part of the eyes that was visible at all. It was doubtful whether the pony could see any more. Now and then he snorted, to clear his nose, and by the action seemed to plug it tighter. Jody looked dispiritedly at the pony's coat. The hair lay rough and unkempt and seemed to have lost all of its old luster. Billy stood quietly beside the stall. Jody hated to ask, but he had to know.

"Billy, is he—is he going to get well?"

Billy put his fingers between the bars under the pony's jaw and felt about. "Feel here," he said and he guided Jody's fingers to a large lump under the jaw. "When that gets bigger, I'll open it up and then he'll get better."

Jody looked quickly away, for he had heard about that lump. "What is it the matter with him?"

Billy didn't want to answer, but he had to. He couldn't be wrong three times. "Strangles," he said shortly, "but don't you worry about that. I'll pull him out of it. I've seen them get well when they were worse than Gabilan is. I'm going to steam him now. You can help."

"Yes," Jody said miserably. He followed Billy into the grain room and watched him make the steaming bag ready. It was a long canvas nose bag with straps to go over a horse's ears. Billy filled it one-third full of bran and then he added a couple of handfuls of dried hops. On top of the dry substance he poured a little carbolic acid and a little turpentine. "I'll be mixing it all

up while you run to the house for a kettle of boiling water," Billy said.

When Jody came back with the steaming kettle, Billy buckled the straps over Gabilan's head and fitted the bag tightly around his nose. Then through a little hole in the side of the bag he poured the boiling water on the mixture. The pony started away as a cloud of strong steam rose up, but then the soothing fumes crept through his nose and into his lungs, and the sharp steam began to clear out the nasal passages. He breathed loudly. His legs trembled in an ague, and his eyes closed against the biting cloud. Billy poured in more water and kept the steam rising for fifteen minutes. At last he set down the kettle and took the bag from Gabilan's nose. The pony looked better. He breathed freely, and his eyes were open wider than they had been.

"See how good it makes him feel," Billy said. "Now we'll wrap him up in the blanket again. Maybe he'll be nearly well by morning."

"I'll stay with him tonight," Jody suggested.

"No. Don't you do it. I'll bring my blankets down here and put them in the hay. You can stay tomorrow and steam him if he needs it."

The evening was falling when they went to the house for their supper. Jody didn't even realize that someone else had fed the chickens and filled the wood-box. He walked up past the house to the dark brush line and took a drink of water from the tub. The spring water was so cold that it stung his mouth and drove a shiver through him. The sky above the hills was still light. He saw a hawk flying so high that it caught the sun on its breast and shone like a spark. Two blackbirds were driving him down the sky, glittering as

they attacked their enemy. In the west, the clouds were moving in to rain again.

Jody's father didn't speak at all while the family ate supper, but after Billy Buck had taken his blankets and gone to sleep in the barn, Carl Tiflin built a high fire in the fireplace and told stories. He told about the wild man who ran naked through the country and had a tail and ears like a horse, and he told about the rabbit-cats of Moro Cojo that hopped into the trees for birds. He revived the famous Maxwell brothers who found a vein of gold and hid the traces of it so carefully that they could never find it again.

Jody sat with his chin in his hands; his mouth worked nervously, and his father gradually became aware that he wasn't listening very carefully. "Isn't that funny?" he asked.

Jody laughed politely and said, "Yes, sir." His father was angry and hurt, then. He didn't tell any more stories. After a while, Jody took a lantern and went down to the barn. Billy Buck was asleep in the hay, and, except that his breath rasped a little in his lungs, the pony seemed to be much better. Jody stayed a little while, running his fingers over the red rough coat, and then he took up the lantern and went back to the house. When he was in bed, his mother came into the room.

"Have you enough covers on? It's getting winter."

"Yes, ma'am."

"Well, get some rest tonight." She hesitated to go out, stood uncertainly. "The pony will be all right," she said.

Jody was tired. He went to sleep quickly and didn't awaken until dawn. The triangle sounded, and Billy Buck came up from the barn before Jody could get out of the house.

"How is he?" Jody demanded.

Billy always wolfed his breakfast. "Pretty good. I'm going to open that lump this morning. Then he'll be better maybe."

After breakfast, Billy got out his best knife, one with a needle point. He whetted the shining blade a long time on a little carborundum stone. He tried the point and the blade again and again on his calloused thumb-ball, and at last he tried it on his upper lip.

On the way to the barn, Jody noticed how the young grass was up and how the stubble was melting day by day into the new green crop of volunteer. It was a cold sunny morning.

As soon as he saw the pony, Jody knew he was worse. His eyes were closed and sealed shut with dried mucus. His head hung so low that his nose almost touched the straw of his bed. There was a little groan in each breath, a deep-seated, patient groan.

Billy lifted the weak head and made a quick slash with the knife. Jody saw the yellow pus run out. He held up the head while Billy swabbed out the wound with weak carbolic acid salve.

"Now he'll feel better," Billy assured him. "That yellow poison is what makes him sick."

Jody looked unbelieving at Billy Buck. "He's awful sick."

Billy thought a long time what to say. He nearly tossed off a careless assurance, but he saved himself in time. "Yes, he's pretty sick," he said at last. "I've seen worse ones get well. If he doesn't get pneumonia, we'll pull him through. You stay with him. If he gets worse, you can come and get me."

For a long time after Billy went away, Jody stood beside the pony, stroking him behind the ears. The pony didn't flip his

head the way he had done when he was well. The groaning in his breathing was becoming more hollow.

Doubletree Mutt looked into the barn, his big tail waving provocatively, and Jody was so incensed at his health that he found a hard black clod on the floor and deliberately threw it. Doubletree Mutt went yelping away to nurse a bruised paw.

In the middle of the morning, Billy Buck came back and made another steam bag. Jody watched to see whether the pony improved this time as he had before. His breathing eased a little, but he did not raise his head.

The Saturday dragged on. Late in the afternoon Jody went to the house and brought his bedding down and made up a place to sleep in the hay. He didn't ask permission. He knew from the way his mother looked at him that she would let him do almost anything. That night he left a lantern burning on a wire over the box stall. Billy had told him to rub the pony's legs every little while.

At nine o'clock the wind sprang up and howled around the barn. And in spite of his worry, Jody grew sleepy. He got into his blankets and went to sleep, but the breathy groans of the pony sounded in his dreams. And in his sleep he heard a crashing noise which went on and on until it awakened him. The wind was rushing through the barn. He sprang up and looked down the lane of stalls. The barn door had blown open, and the pony was gone.

He caught the lantern and ran outside into the gale, and he saw Gabilan weakly shambling away into the darkness, head down, legs working slowly and mechanically. When Jody ran up and caught him by the forelock, he allowed himself to be

led back and put into his stall. His groans were louder, and a fierce whistling came from his nose. Jody didn't sleep any more then. The hissing of the pony's breath grew louder and sharper.

He was glad when Billy Buck came in at dawn. Billy looked for a time at the pony as though he had never seen him before. He felt the ears and flanks. "Jody," he said, "I've got to do something you won't want to see. You run up to the house for a while."

Jody grabbed him fiercely by the forearm. "You're not going to shoot him?"

Billy patted his hand. "No. I'm going to open a little hole in his windpipe so he can breathe. His nose is filled up. When he gets well, we'll put a little brass button in the hole for him to breathe through."

Jody couldn't have gone away if he had wanted to. It was awful to see the red hide cut, but infinitely more terrible to know it was being cut and not to see it. "I'll stay right here," he said bitterly. "You sure you got to?"

"Yes. I'm sure. If you stay, you can hold his head. If it doesn't make you sick, that is."

The fine knife came out again and was whetted again just as carefully as it had been the first time. Jody held the pony's head up and the throat taut, while Billy felt up and down for the right place. Jody sobbed once as the bright knife point disappeared into the throat. The pony plunged weakly away and then stood still, trembling violently. The blood ran thickly out and up the knife and across Billy's hand and into his shirtsleeve. The sure square hand sawed out a round hole in the flesh, and the breath came bursting out of the hole, throwing a fine spray of blood. With the rush of oxygen, the pony

took a sudden strength. He lashed out with his hind feet and tried to rear, but Jody held his head down while Billy mopped the new wound with carbolic salve. It was a good job. The blood stopped flowing and the air puffed out the hole and sucked it in regularly with a little bubbling noise.

The rain brought in by the night wind began to fall on the barn roof. Then the triangle rang for breakfast. "You go up and eat while I wait," Billy said. "We've got to keep this hole from plugging up."

Jody walked slowly out of the barn. He was too dispirited to tell Billy how the barn door had blown open and let the pony out. He emerged into the wet gray morning and sloshed up to the house, taking a perverse pleasure in splashing through all the puddles. His mother fed him and put dry clothes on. She didn't question him. She seemed to know he couldn't answer questions. But when he was ready to go back to the barn she brought him a pan of steaming meal. "Give him this," she said.

But Jody did not take the pan. He said, "He won't eat anything," and ran out of the house. At the barn, Billy showed him how to fix a ball of cotton on a stick, with which to swab out the breathing hole when it became clogged with mucus.

Jody's father walked into the barn and stood with them in front of the stall. At length he turned to the boy. "Hadh't you better come with me? I'm going to drive over the hill." Jody shook his head. "You better come on, out of this," his father insisted.

Billy turned on him angrily. "Let him alone. It's his pony, isn't it?"

Carl Tiflin walked away without saying another word. His feelings were badly hurt.

All morning Jody kept the wound open and the air passing in and out freely. At noon the pony lay wearily down on his side and stretched his nose out.

Billy came back. "If you're going to stay with him tonight, you better take a little nap," he said. Jody went absently out of the barn. The sky had cleared to a hard thin blue. Everywhere the birds were busy with worms that had come to the damp surface of the ground.

Jody walked to the brush line and sat on the edge of the mossy tub. He looked down at the house and at the old bunk-house and at the dark cypress tree. The place was familiar, but curiously changed. It wasn't itself any more, but a frame for things that were happening. A cold wind blew out of the east now, signifying that the rain was over for a little while. At his feet Jody could see the little arms of new weeds spreading out over the ground. In the mud about the spring were thousands of quail tracks.

Doubletree Mutt came sideways and embarrassed up through the vegetable patch, and Jody, remembering how he had thrown the clod, put his arm about the dog's neck and kissed him on his wide black nose. Doubletree Mutt sat still, as though he knew some solemn thing was happening. His big tail slapped the ground gravely. Jody pulled a swollen tick out of Mutt's neck and popped it dead between his thumb-nails. It was a nasty thing. He washed his hands in the cold spring water.

Except for the steady swish of the wind, the farm was very quiet. Jody knew his mother wouldn't mind if he didn't go in to eat his lunch. After a little while he went slowly back to the barn. Mutt crept into his own little house and whined softly to himself for a long time.

## *The Red Pony*

Billy Buck stood up from the box and surrendered the cotton swab. The pony still lay on his side and the wound in his throat bellowsed in and out. When Jody saw how dry and dead the hair looked, he knew at last that there was no hope for the pony. He had seen the dead hair before on dogs and on cows, and it was a sure sign. He sat heavily on the box and let down the barrier of the box stall. For a long time he kept his eyes on the moving wound, and at last he dozed, and the afternoon passed quickly. Just before dark his mother brought a deep dish of stew and left it for him and went away. Jody ate a little of it, and, when it was dark, he set the lantern on the floor by the pony's head so he could watch the wound and keep it open. And he dozed again until the night chill awakened him. The wind was blowing fiercely, bringing the north cold with it. Jody brought a blanket from his bed in the hay and wrapped himself in it. Gabilan's breathing was quiet at last; the hole in his throat moved gently. The owls flew through the hayloft, shrieking and looking for mice. Jody put his hands down on his head and slept. In his sleep he was aware that the wind had increased. He heard it slamming about the barn.

It was daylight when he awakened. The barn door had swung open. The pony was gone. He sprang up and ran out into the morning light.

The pony's tracks were plain enough, dragging through the frostlike dew on the young grass, tired tracks with little lines between them where the hoofs had dragged. They headed for the brush line halfway up the ridge. Jody broke into a run and followed them. The sun shone on the sharp white quartz that stuck through the ground here and there. As he followed the plain trail, a shadow cut across in

front of him. He looked up and saw a high circle of black buzzards, and the slowly revolving circle dropped lower and lower. The solemn birds soon disappeared over the ridge. Jody ran faster then, forced on by panic and rage. The trail entered the brush at last and followed a winding route among the tall sage bushes.

At the top of the ridge Jody was winded. He paused, puffing noisily. The blood pounded in his ears. Then he saw what he was looking for. Below, in one of the little clearings in the brush, lay the red pony. In the distance, Jody could see the legs moving slowly and convulsively. And in a circle around him stood the buzzards, waiting for the moment of death they know so well.

Jody leaped forward and plunged down the hill. The wet ground muffled his steps and the brush hid him. When he arrived, it was all over. The first buzzard sat on the pony's head and its beak had just risen dripping with dark eye fluid. Jody plunged into the circle like a cat. The black brotherhood arose in a cloud, but the big one on the pony's head was too late. As it hopped along to take off, Jody caught its wing tip and pulled it down. It was nearly as big as he was. The free wing crashed into his face with the force of a club, but he hung on. The claws fastened on his leg and the wing elbows battered his head on either side. Jody groped blindly with his free hand. His fingers found the neck of the struggling bird. The red eyes looked into his face, calm and fearless and fierce; the naked head turned from side to side. Then the beak opened and vomited a stream of putrefied fluid. Jody brought up his knee and fell on the great bird. He held the neck to the ground with one hand while his other found a piece of sharp white quartz. The first blow broke the

### *Coming-of-Age in Our Time*

beak sideways and black blood spurted from the twisted, leathery mouth corners. He struck again and missed. The red fearless eyes still looked at him, impersonal and unafraid and detached. He struck again and again, until the buzzard lay dead, until its head was a red pulp. He was still beating the dead bird when Billy Buck pulled him off and held him tightly to calm his shaking.

Carl Tiflin wiped the blood from the boy's face with a red bandana. Jody was

limp and quiet now. His father moved the buzzard with his toe. "Jody," he explained, "the buzzard didn't kill the pony. Don't you know that?"

"I know it," Jody said wearily.

It was Billy Buck who was angry. He had lifted Jody in his arms, and had turned to carry him home. But he turned back on Carl Tiflin. "'Course he knows it," Billy said furiously, "Jesus Christ! man, can't you see how he'd feel about it?"

## YOUNG ARCHIMEDES

by ALDOUS HUXLEY

MEN CANNOT LIVE at ease except where they have mastered their surroundings and where their accumulated lives outnumber and outweigh the vegetative lives about them. Stripped of its dark woods, planted, terraced, and tilled almost to the mountain tops, the Tuscan landscape is humanized and safe. Sometimes upon those who live in the midst of it there comes a longing for some place that is solitary, inhuman, lifeless, or peopled only with alien life. But the longing is soon satisfied, and one is glad to return to the civilized and submissive scene.

I found that house on the hilltop the ideal dwelling-place. For there, safe in the midst of a humanized landscape, one was yet alone; one could be as solitary as one liked. Neighbors whom one never sees at close quarters are the ideal and perfect neighbors.

Our nearest neighbors, in terms of physical proximity, lived very near. We had two sets of them, as a matter of fact, al-

most in the same house with us. One was the peasant family, who lived in a long, low building, part dwelling-house, part stables, storerooms and cowsheds, adjoining the villa. Our other neighbors—intermittent neighbors, however, for they only ventured out of town every now and then, during the most flawless weather—were the owners of the villa, who had reserved for themselves the smaller wing of the huge L-shaped house—a mere dozen rooms or so—leaving the remaining eighteen or twenty to us.

They were a curious couple, our proprietors. An old husband, gray, listless, tottering, seventy at least; and a signora of about forty, short, very plump, with tiny fat hands and feet and a pair of very large, very dark black eyes, which she used with all the skill of a born comedian. Her vitality, if you could have harnessed it and made it do some useful work, would have supplied a whole town with electric light. The physicists talk of deriving energy

From *Young Archimedes and Other Stories*, by Aldous Huxley. Harper & Brothers. Copyright, 1924, by Aldous Huxley.

from the atom; they would be more profitably employed nearer home—in discovering some way of tapping those enormous stores of vital energy which accumulate in unemployed women of sanguine temperament and which, in the present imperfect state of social and scientific organization, vent themselves in ways that are generally so deplorable: in interfering with other people's affairs, in working up emotional scenes, in thinking about love and making it, and in bothering men till they cannot get on with their work.

Signora Bondi got rid of her superfluous energy, among other ways, by "doing in" her tenants. The old gentleman, who was a retired merchant with a reputation for the most perfect rectitude, was allowed to have no dealings with us. When we came to see the house, it was the wife who showed us round. It was she who, with a lavish display of charm, with irresistible rollings of the eyes, expatiated on the merits of the place, sang the praises of the electric pump, glorified the bathroom (considering which, she insisted, the rent was remarkably moderate), and when we suggested calling in a surveyor to look over the house, earnestly begged us, as though our well-being were her only consideration, not to waste our money unnecessarily in doing anything so superfluous. "After all," she said, "we are honest people. I wouldn't dream of letting you the house except in perfect condition. Have confidence." And she looked at me with an appealing, pained expression in her magnificent eyes, as though begging me not to insult her by my coarse suspiciousness. And leaving us no time to pursue the subject of surveyors any further, she began assuring us that our little boy was the most beautiful angel she had ever seen. By the time our interview with

Signora Bondi was at an end, we had definitely decided to take the house.

"Charming woman," I said, as we left the house. But I think that Elizabeth was not quite so certain of it as I.

Then the pump episode began.

On the evening of our arrival in the house we switched on the electricity. The pump made a very professional whirring noise; but no water came out of the taps in the bathroom. We looked at one another doubtfully.

"Charming woman?" Elizabeth raised her eyebrows.

We asked for interviews; but somehow the old gentleman could never see us, and the Signora was invariably out or indisposed. We left notes; they were never answered. In the end, we found that the only method of communicating with our landlords, who were living in the same house with us, was to go down into Florence and send a registered express letter to them. For this they had to sign two separate receipts and even, if we chose to pay forty centimes more, a third incriminating document, which was then returned to us. There could be no pretending, as there always was with ordinary letters or notes, that the communication had never been received. We began at last to get answers to our complaints. The Signora, who wrote all the letters, started by telling us that, naturally, the pump didn't work, as the cisterns were empty, owing to the long drought. I had to walk three miles to the post office in order to register my letter reminding her that there had been a violent thunderstorm only last Wednesday, and that the tanks were consequently more than half full. The answer came back: bath water had not been guaranteed in the contract; and if I wanted it, why hadn't I had the pump looked at



## *Coming-of-Age in Our Time*

before I took the house? Another walk into town to ask the Signora next door whether she remembered her adjurations to us to have confidence in her, and to inform her that the existence in a house of a bathroom was in itself an implicit guarantee of bath water. The reply to that was that the Signora couldn't continue to have communications with people who wrote so rudely to her. After that I put the matter into the hands of a lawyer. Two months later the pump was actually replaced. But we had to serve a writ on the lady before she gave in. And the costs were considerable.

One day, towards the end of the episode, I met the old gentleman in the road, taking his big maremman dog for a walk—or being taken, rather, for a walk by the dog. For where the dog pulled the old gentleman had perforce to follow. And when it stopped to smell, or scratch the ground, or leave against a gatepost its visiting-card or an offensive challenge, patiently, at his end of the leash, the old man had to wait. I passed him standing at the side of the road, a few hundred yards below our house. The dog was sniffing at the roots of one of the twin cypresses which grew one on either side of the entry to a farm; I heard the beast growling indignantly to itself, as though it scented an intolerable insult. Old Signor Bondi, leashed to his dog, was waiting. The knees inside the tubular gray trousers were slightly bent. Leaning on his cane, he stood gazing mournfully and vacantly at the view. The whites of his old eyes were discolored, like ancient billiard balls. In the gray, deeply wrinkled face, his nose was dyspeptically red. His white moustache, ragged and yellowing at the fringes, drooped in a melancholy curve. In his black tie he wore a very large diamond;

perhaps that was what Signora Bondi had found so attractive about him.

I took off my hat as I approached. The old man stared at me absently, and it was only when I was already almost past him that he recollected who I was.

"Wait," he called after me, "wait!" And he hastened down the road in pursuit. Taken utterly by surprise and at a disadvantage—for it was engaged in retorting to the affront imprinted on the cypress roots—the dog permitted itself to be jerked after him. Too much astonished to be anything but obedient, it followed its master. "Wait!"

I waited.

"My dear sir," said the old gentleman, catching me by the lapel of my coat and blowing most disagreeably in my face, "I want to apologize." He looked around him, as though afraid that even here he might be overheard. "I want to apologize," he went on, "about that wretched pump business. I assure you that, if it had been only my affair, I'd have put the thing right as soon as you asked. You were quite right: a bathroom is an implicit guarantee of bath water. I saw from the first that we should have no chance if it came to court. And besides, I think one ought to treat one's tenants as handsomely as one can afford to. But my wife"—he lowered his voice—"the fact is that she likes this sort of thing, even when she knows that she's in the wrong and must lose. And besides, she hoped, I dare say, that you'd get tired of asking and have the job done yourself. I told her from the first that we ought to give in; but she wouldn't listen. You see, she enjoys it. Still, now she sees that it must be done. In the course of the next two or three days you'll be having your bath water. But I thought I'd just like to tell you how . . ." But the Maremmano,

which had recovered by this time from its surprise of a moment since, suddenly bounded, growling, up the road. The old gentleman tried to hold the beast, strained at the leash, tottered unsteadily, then gave way and allowed himself to be dragged off. ". . . how sorry I am," he went on, as he receded from me, "that this little misunderstanding . . ." But it was no use. "Good-bye." He smiled politely, made a little deprecating gesture, as though he had suddenly remembered a pressing engagement, and had no time to explain what it was. "Good-bye." He took off his hat and abandoned himself completely to the dog.

A week later the water really did begin to flow, and the day after our first bath Signora Bondi, dressed in dove-gray satin and wearing all her pearls, came to call.

"Is it peace now?" she asked, with a charming frankness, as she shook hands.

We assured her that, so far as we were concerned, it certainly was.

"But why *did* you write me such dreadfully rude letters?" she said, turning on me a reproachful glance that ought to have moved the most ruthless malefactor to contrition. "And then that writ. How *could* you? To a lady . . ."

I mumbled something about the pump and our wanting baths.

"But how could you expect me to listen to you while you were in that mood? Why didn't you set about it differently—politely, charmingly?" She smiled at me and dropped her fluttering eyelids.

I thought it best to change the conversation. It is disagreeable, when one is in the right, to be made to appear in the wrong.

A few weeks later we had a letter—duly registered and by express messenger—in which the Signora asked us whether we

proposed to renew our lease (which was only for six months), and notifying us that, if we did, the rent would be raised 25 per cent, in consideration of the improvements which had been carried out. We thought ourselves lucky, at the end of much bargaining, to get the lease renewed for a whole year with an increase in the rent of only 15 per cent.

It was chiefly for the sake of the view that we put up with these intolerable extortions. But we had found other reasons, after a few days' residence, for liking the house. Of these, the most cogent was that, in the peasant's youngest child, we had discovered what seemed the perfect play-fellow for our own small boy. Between little Guido—for that was his name—and the youngest of his brothers and sisters there was a gap of six or seven years. His two elders brothers worked with their father in the fields; since the time of the mother's death, two or three years before we knew them, the eldest sister had ruled the house, and the younger, who had just left school, helped her and in between-whiles kept an eye on Guido, who by this time, however, needed very little looking after; for he was between six and seven years old and as precocious, self-assured, and responsible as the children of the poor, left as they are to themselves almost from the time they can walk, generally are.

Though fully two and a half years older than little Robin—and at that age thirty months are crammed with half a lifetime's experience—Guido took no undue advantage of his superior intelligence and strength. I have never seen a child more patient, tolerant, and untyrannical. He never laughed at Robin for his clumsy efforts to imitate his own prodigious feats; he did not tease or bully, but helped his small companion when he was in difficul-

## *Coming-of-Age in Our Time*

ties and explained when he could not understand. In return, Robin adored him, regarded him as the model and perfect Big Boy, and slavishly imitated him in every way he could.

These attempts of Robin's to imitate his companion were often exceedingly ludicrous. For by an obscure psychological law, words and actions in themselves quite serious become comic as soon as they are copied; and the more accurately, if the imitation is a deliberate parody, the funnier—for an overloaded imitation of someone we know does not make us laugh so much as one that is almost indistinguishably like the original. The bad imitation is only ludicrous when it is a piece of sincere and earnest flattery which does not quite come off. Robin's imitations were mostly of this kind. His heroic and unsuccessful attempts to perform the feats of strength and skill, which Guido could do with ease, were exquisitely comic. And his careful, long-drawn imitations of Guido's habits and mannerisms were no less amusing. Most ludicrous of all, because most earnestly undertaken and most incongruous in the imitator, were Robin's impersonations of Guido in the pensive mood. Guido was a thoughtful child, given to brooding and sudden abstractions. One would find him sitting in a corner by himself, chin in hand, elbow on knee, plunged, to all appearances, in the profoundest meditation. And sometimes, even in the midst of his play, he would suddenly break off, to stand, his hands behind his back, frowning and staring at the ground. When this happened Robin became overawed and a little disquieted. In a puzzled silence he looked at his companion. "Guido," he would say softly, "Guido." But Guido was generally too much preoccupied to answer; and Robin, not venturing to in-

sist, would creep near him, and throwing himself as nearly as possible into Guido's attitude—standing Napoleonically, his hands clasped behind him, or sitting in the posture of Michelangelo's Lorenzo the Magnificent—would try to meditate too. Every few seconds he would turn his bright blue eyes towards the elder child to see whether he was doing it quite right. But at the end of a minute he began to grow impatient; meditation wasn't his strong point. "Guido," he called again and, louder, "Guido!" And he would take him by the hand and try to pull him away. Sometimes Guido roused himself from his reverie and went back to the interrupted game. Sometimes he paid no attention. Melancholy, perplexed, Robin had to take himself off to play by himself. And Guido would go on sitting or standing there, quite still; and his eyes, if one looked into them, were beautiful in their grave and pensive calm.

They were large eyes, set far apart and, what was strange in a dark-haired Italian child, of a luminous pale blue-gray color. They were not always grave and calm, as in these pensive moments. When he was playing, when he talked or laughed, they lit up; and the surface of those clear, pale lakes of thought seemed, as it were, to be shaken into brilliant sun-flashing ripples. Above those eyes was a beautiful forehead, high and steep and domed in a curve that was like the subtle curve of a rose petal. The nose was straight, the chin small and rather pointed, the mouth drooped a little sadly at the corners.

I have a snapshot of the two children sitting together on the parapet of the terrace. Guido sits almost facing the camera, but looking a little to one side and downwards; his hands are crossed in his lap and his expression, his attitude are

thoughtful, grave, and meditative. It is Guido in one of those moods of abstraction into which he would pass even at the height of laughter and play—quite suddenly and completely, as though he had all at once taken it into his head to go away and had left the silent and beautiful body behind, like an empty house, to wait for his return. And by his side sits little Robin, turning to look up at him, his face half averted from the camera, but the curve of his cheek showing that he is laughing; one little raised hand is caught at the top of a gesture, the other clutches at Guido's sleeve as though he were urging him to come away and play. And the legs dangling from the parapet have been seen by the blinking instrument in the midst of an impatient wriggle; he is on the point of slipping down and running off to play hide-and-seek in the garden. All the essential characteristics of both the children are in that little snapshot.

"If Robin were not Robin," Elizabeth used to say, "I could almost wish he were Guido."

And even at that time, when I took no particular interest in the child, I agreed with her. Guido seemed to me one of the most charming little boys I had ever seen.

We were not alone in admiring him. Signora Bondi when, in those cordial intervals between our quarrels, she came to call, was constantly speaking of him. "Such a beautiful, beautiful child!" she would exclaim with enthusiasm. "It's really a waste that he should belong to peasants who can't afford to dress him properly. If he were mine, I should put him into black velvet; or little white knickers and a white knitted silk jersey with a red line at the collar and cuffs! or perhaps a white sailor suit would be pretty. And in winter a little fur coat,

with a squirrel skin cap, and possibly Russian boots . . ." Her imagination was running away with her. "And I'd let his hair grow, like a page's, and have it just curled up a little at the tips. And a straight fringe across his forehead. Everyone would turn round and stare after us if I took him out with me in Via Tornabuoni."

What you want, I should have liked to tell her, is not a child; it's a clock-work doll or a performing monkey. But I did not say so—partly because I could not think of the Italian for a clock-work doll and partly because I did not want to risk having the rent raised another 15 per cent.

"Ah, if only I had a little boy like that!" She sighed and modestly dropped her eyelids. "I adore children. I sometimes think of adopting one—that is, if my husband would allow it."

I thought of the poor old gentleman being dragged along at the heels of his big white dog and inwardly smiled.

"But I don't know if he would," the Signora was continuing, "I don't know if he would." She was silent for a moment, as though considering a new idea.

A few days later, when we were sitting in the garden after luncheon, drinking our coffee, Guido's father, instead of passing with a nod and the usual cheerful good-day, halted in front of us and began to talk. He was a fine handsome man, not very tall, but well-proportioned, quick and elastic in his movements, and full of life. He had a thin brown face, featured like a Roman's and lit by a pair of the most intelligent-looking gray eyes I ever saw. They exhibited almost too much intelligence when, as not infrequently happened, he was trying, with an assumption of perfect frankness and a childlike innocence, to take one in or get something out of one. Delighting in itself, the intelligence shone

## *Coming-of-Age in Our Time*

there mischievously. The face might be ingenuous, impassive, almost imbecile in its expression; but the eyes on these occasions gave him completely away. One knew, when they glittered like that, that one would have to be careful.

Today, however, there was no dangerous light in them. He wanted nothing out of us, nothing of any value—only advice, which is a commodity, he knew, that most people are only too happy to part with. But he wanted advice on what was, for us, rather a delicate subject: on Signora Bondi. Carlo had often complained to us about her. The old man is good, he told us, very good and kind indeed. Which meant, I dare say, among other things, that he could easily be swindled. But his wife . . . Well, the woman was a beast. And he would tell us stories of her insatiable rapacity: she was always claiming more than the half of the produce which, by the laws of the metayage<sup>1</sup> system, was the proprietor's due. He complained of her suspiciousness: she was forever accusing him of sharp practices, of downright stealing—him, he struck his breast, the soul of honesty. He complained of her short-sighted avarice: she wouldn't spend enough on manure, wouldn't buy him another cow, wouldn't have electric light installed in the stables. And we had sympathized, but cautiously, without expressing too strong an opinion on the subject. The Italians are wonderfully noncommittal in their speech; they will give nothing away to an interested person until they are quite certain that it is right and necessary and, above all, safe to do so. We had lived long enough among them to imitate their caution. What we said to Carlo would be sure, sooner or later, to get back to Signora

Bondi. There was nothing to be gained by unnecessarily embittering our relations with the lady—only another 15 per cent, very likely, to be lost.

Today he wasn't so much complaining as feeling perplexed. The Signora had sent for him, it seemed, and asked him how he would like it if she were to make an offer—it was all very hypothetical in the cautious Italian style—to adopt little Guido. Carlo's first instinct had been to say that he wouldn't like it at all. But an answer like that would have been too coarsely committal. He had preferred to say that he would think about it. And now he was asking for our advice.

Do what you think best, was what in effect we replied. But we gave it distantly but distinctly to be understood that we didn't think that Signora Bondi would make a very good foster-mother for the child. And Carlo was inclined to agree. Besides, he was very fond of the boy.

"But the thing is," he concluded rather gloomily, "that if she has really set her heart on getting hold of the child, there's nothing she won't do to get him—nothing."

He too, I could see, would have liked the physicists to start on unemployed childless women of sanguine temperament before they tried to tackle the atom. Still, I reflected, as I watched him striding away along the terrace, singing powerfully from a brazen gullet as he went, there was force there, there was life enough in those elastic limbs, behind those bright gray eyes, to put up a good fight even against the accumulated vital energies of Signora Bondi.

It was a few days after this that my gramophone and two or three boxes of records arrived from England. They were

<sup>1</sup> share-cropping.

a great comfort to us on the hilltop, providing as they did the only thing in which that spiritually fertile solitude—otherwise a perfect Swiss Family Robinson's island—was lacking: music. There is not much music to be heard nowadays in Florence. The times when Dr. Burney could tour through Italy, listening to an unending succession of new operas, symphonies, quartets, cantatas, are gone. Gone are the days when a learned musician, inferior only to the Reverend Father Martini of Bologna, could admire what the peasants sang and the strolling players thrummed and scraped on their instruments. I have traveled for weeks through the peninsula and hardly heard a note that was not "Salome" or the Fascists' song. Rich in nothing else that makes life agreeable or even supportable, the northern metropolises are rich in music. That is perhaps the only inducement that a reasonable man can find for living there. The other attractions—organized gaiety, people, miscellaneous conversation, the social pleasures—what are those, after all, but an expense of spirit that buys nothing in return? And then the cold, the darkness, the mouldering dirt, the damp and squalor. . . . No, where there is no necessity that retains, music can be the only inducement. And that, thanks to the ingenious Edison, can now be taken about in a box and unpacked in whatever solitude one chooses to visit. One can live at Benin, or Nuneaton, or Tozeur in the Sahara, and still hear Mozart quartets, and selections from the Well-Tempered Clavichord, and the Fifth Symphony, and the Brahms clarinet quintet, and motets by Palestrina.

Carlo, who had gone down to the station with his mule and cart to fetch the

packing-case, was vastly interested in the machine.

"One will hear some music again," he said, as he watched me unpacking the gramophone and the disks. "It is difficult to do much oneself."

Still, I reflected, he managed to do a good deal. On warm nights we used to hear him, where he sat at the door of his house, playing his guitar and softly singing; the eldest boy shrilled out the melody on the mandolin, and sometimes the whole family would join in, and the darkness would be filled with their passionate, throaty singing. Piedigrotta<sup>2</sup> songs they mostly sang; and the voices drooped slurringly from note to note, lazily climbed or jerked themselves with sudden sobbing emphases from one tone to another. At a distance and under the stars the effect was not unpleasing.

"Before the war," he went on, "in normal times" (and Carlo had a hope, even a belief, that the normal times were coming back and that life would soon be as cheap and easy as it had been in the days before the flood), "I used to go and listen to the operas at the Politeama. Ah, they were magnificent. But it costs five lire now to get in."

"Too much," I agreed.

"Have you got *Trovatore*?" he asked.

I shook my head.

"*Rigoletto*?"

"I'm afraid not."

"*Bohème? Fanciulla del West? Pagliacci*?"

I had to go on disappointing him.

"Not even *Norma*? Or the *Barbiere*?"

I put on Battistini in "*La ci darem*" out of *Don Giovanni*. He agreed that the singing was good; but I could see that he

<sup>2</sup> popular songs of Naples.

## Coming-of-Age in Our Time

didn't much like the music. Why not? He found it difficult to explain.

"It's not like *Pagliacci*," he said at last.

"Not palpitating?" I suggested, using a word with which I was sure he would be familiar; for it occurs in every Italian political speech and patriotic leading article.

"Not palpitating," he agreed.

And I reflected that it is precisely by the difference between *Pagliacci* and *Don Giovanni*, between the palpitating and the nonpalpitating, that modern musical taste is separated from the old. The corruption of the best, I thought, is the worst. Beethoven taught music to palpitate with his intellectual and spiritual passion. It has gone on palpitating ever since, but with the passion of inferior men. Indirectly, I thought, Beethoven is responsible for *Parsifal*, *Pagliacci*, and the *Poem of Fire*; still more indirectly for *Samson and Delilah* and "Ivy, cling to me." Mozart's melodies may be brilliant, memorable, infectious; but they don't palpitate, don't catch you between wind and water, don't send the listener off into erotic ecstasies.

Carlo and his elder children found my gramophone, I am afraid, rather a disappointment. They were too polite, however, to say so openly; they merely ceased, after the first day or two, to take any interest in the machine and the music it played. They preferred the guitar and their own singing.

Guido, on the other hand, was immensely interested. And he liked, not the cheerful dance tunes, to whose sharp rhythms our little Robin loved to go stamping round and round the room, pretending that he was a whole regiment of soldiers, but the genuine stuff. The first record he heard, I remember, was that of the slow movement of Bach's Concerto in D Minor for two violins. That was the

disk I put on the turntable as soon as Carlo had left me. It seemed to me, so to speak, the most musical piece of music with which I could refresh my long-parched mind—the coolest and clearest of all draughts. The movement had just got under way and was beginning to unfold its pure and melancholy beauties in accordance with the laws of the most exacting intellectual logic, when the two children, Guido in front and little Robin breathlessly following, came clattering into the room from the loggia.

Guido came to a halt in front of the gramophone and stood there, motionless, listening. His pale blue-gray eyes opened themselves wide; making a little nervous gesture that I had often noticed in him before, he plucked at his lower lip with his thumb and forefinger. He must have taken a deep breath; for I noticed that, after listening for a few seconds, he sharply expired and drew in a fresh gulp of air. For an instant he looked at me—a questioning, astonished, rapturous look—gave a little laugh that ended in a kind of nervous shudder, and turned back towards the source of the incredible sounds. Slavishly imitating his elder comrade, Robin had also taken up his stand in front of the gramophone, and in exactly the same position, glancing at Guido from time to time to make sure that he was doing everything, down to plucking at his lip, in the correct way. But after a minute or so he became bored.

"Soldiers," he said, turning to me; "I want soldiers. Like in London." He remembered the rag-time and the jolly marches round and round the room.

I put my fingers to my lips. "Afterwards," I whispered.

Robin managed to remain silent and still for perhaps another twenty seconds.

## Young Archimedes

Then he seized Guido by the arm, shouting, "Vieni, Guido! Soldieri. Soldati. Vieni giuocare soldati!"

It was then, for the first time, that I saw Guido impatient. "Vail!" he whispered angrily, slapped at Robin's clutching hand and pushed him roughly away. And he leaned a little closer to the instrument, as though to make up by yet intenser listening for what the interruption had caused him to miss.

Robin looked at him, astonished. Such a thing had never happened before. Then he burst out crying and came to me for consolation.

When the quarrel was made up—and Guido was sincerely repentant, was as nice as he knew how to be when the music had stopped and his mind was free to think of Robin once more—I asked him how he liked the music. He said he thought it was beautiful. But *bello* in Italian is too vague a word, too easily and frequently uttered, to mean very much.

"What did you like best?" I insisted. For he had seemed to enjoy it so much that I was curious to find out what had really impressed him.

He was silent for a moment, pensively frowning. "Well," he said at last, "I liked the bit that went like this." And he hummed a long phrase. "And then there's the other thing singing at the same time—but what are those things," he interrupted himself, "that sing like that?"

"They're called violins," I said.

"Violins." He nodded. "Well, the other violin goes like this." He hummed again. "Why can't one sing both at once? And what is in that box? What makes it make that noise?" The child poured out his questions.

I answered him as best I could, showing him the little spirals on the disk, the

needle, the diaphragm. I told him to remember how the string of the guitar trembled when one plucked it; sound is a shaking in the air, I told him, and I tried to explain how those shakings get printed on the black disk. Guido listened to me very gravely, nodding from time to time. I had the impression that he understood perfectly well everything I was saying.

By this time, however, poor Robin was so dreadfully bored that in pity for him I had to send the two children out into the garden to play. Guido went obediently; but I could see that he would have preferred to stay indoors and listen to more music. A little while later, when I looked out, he was hiding in the dark recesses of the big bay tree, roaring like a lion, and Robin, laughing, but a little nervously, as though he were afraid that the horrible noise might possibly turn out, after all, to be the roaring of a real lion, was beating the bush with a stick, and shouting, "Come out, come out! I want to shoot you."

After lunch, when Robin had gone upstairs for his afternoon sleep, he reappeared. "May I listen to the music now?" he asked. And for an hour he sat there in front of the instrument, his head cocked slightly on one side, listening while I put on one disk after another.

Thenceforward he came every afternoon. Very soon he knew all my library of records, had his preferences and dislikes, and could ask for what he wanted by humming the principal theme.

"I don't like that one," he said of Strauss's *Till Eulenspiegel*. "It's like what we sing in our house. Not really like, you know. But somehow rather like, all the same. You understand?" He looked at us perplexedly and appealingly, as though



## Coming-of-Age in Our Time

begging us to understand what he meant and so save him from going on explaining. We nodded. Guido went on. "And then," he said, "the end doesn't seem to come properly out of the beginning. It's not like the one you played the first time." He hummed a bar or two from the slow movement of Bach's D Minor Concerto.

"It isn't," I suggested, "like saying: All little boys like playing. Guido is a little boy. Therefore Guido likes playing."

He frowned. "Yes, perhaps that's it," he said at last. "The one you played first is more like that. But, you know," he added, with an excessive regard for truth, "I don't like playing as much as Robin does."

Wagner was among his dislikes; so was Debussy. When I played the record of one of Debussy's Arabesques, he said, "Why does he say the same thing over and over again? He ought to say something new, or go on, or make the thing grow. Can't he think of anything different?" But he was less censorious about the "Après-Midi d'un Faune." "The things have beautiful voices," he said.

Mozart overwhelmed him with delight. The duet from *Don Giovanni*, which his father had found insufficiently palpitating, enchanted Guido. But he preferred the quartets and the orchestral pieces.

"I like music," he said, "better than singing."

Most people, I reflected, like singing better than music; are more interested in the executant than in what he executes, and find the impersonal orchestra less moving than the soloist. The touch of the pianist is the human touch, and the soprano's high C is the personal note. It is for the sake of this touch, that note, that audiences fill the concert halls.

Guido, however, preferred music. True,

he liked "La ci darem"; he liked "Deh vieni alla finestra"; he thought "Che soave zefiretto" so lovely that almost all our concerts had to begin with it. But he preferred the other things. The *Figaro* overture was one of his favorites. There is a passage not far from the beginning of the piece, where the first violins suddenly go rocketing up into the heights of loveliness; as the music approached that point, I used always to see a smile developing and gradually brightening on Guido's face, and when, punctually, the thing happened, he clapped his hands and laughed aloud with pleasure.

On the other side of the same disk, it happened, was recorded Beethoven's *Egmont* overture. He liked that almost better than *Figaro*.

"It has more voices," he explained. And I was delighted by the acuteness of the criticism; for it is precisely in the richness of its orchestration that *Egmont* goes beyond *Figaro*.

But what stirred him almost more than anything was the *Coriolan* overture. The third movement of the Fifth Symphony, the second movement of the Seventh, the slow movement of the Emperor Concerto—all these things ran it pretty close. But none excited him so much as *Coriolan*. One day he made me play it three or four times in succession; then he put it away.

"I don't think I want to hear that any more," he said.

"Why not?"

"It's too . . . too . . ." he hesitated, "too big," he said at last. "I don't really understand it. Play me the one that goes like this." He hummed the phrase from the D Minor Concerto.

"Do you like that one better?" I asked.

He shook his head. "No, it's not that exactly. But it's easier."

"Easier?" It seemed to me rather a queer word to apply to Bach.

"I understand it better."

One afternoon, while we were in the middle of our concert, Signora Bondi was ushered in. She began at once to be overwhelmingly affectionate towards the child; kissed him, patted his head, paid him the most outrageous compliments on his appearance. Guido edged away from her.

"And do you like music?" she asked.

The child nodded.

"I think he has a gift," I said. "At any rate, he has a wonderful ear and a power of listening and criticising such as I've never met with in a child of that age. We're thinking of hiring a piano for him to learn on."

A moment later I was cursing myself for my undue frankness in praising the boy. For Signora Bondi began immediately to protest that, if she could have the upbringing of the child, she would give him the best masters, bring out his talent, make an accomplished maestro of him—and, on the way, an infant prodigy. And at that moment, I am sure, she saw herself sitting maternally, in pearls and black satin, in the lee of the huge Steinway, while an angelic Guido, dressed like little Lord Fauntleroy, rattled out Liszt and Chopin, to the loud delight of a thronged auditorium. She saw the bouquets and all the elaborate floral tributes, heard the clapping and the few well-chosen words with which the veteran maestri, touched almost to tears, would hail the coming of the little genius. It became more than ever important for her to acquire the child.

"You've sent her away fairly ravening," said Elizabeth, when Signora Bondi had gone. "Better tell her next time that you made a mistake, and that the boy's got no musical talent whatever."

In due course, the piano arrived. After giving him the minimum of preliminary instruction, I let Guido loose on it. He began by picking out for himself the melodies he had heard, reconstructing the harmonies in which they were embedded. After a few lessons, he understood the rudiments of musical notation and could read a simple passage at sight, albeit very slowly. The whole process of reading was still strange to him; he had picked up his letters somehow, but nobody had yet taught him to read whole words and sentences.

I took occasion, next time I saw Signora Bondi, to assure her that Guido had disappointed me. There was nothing in his musical talent, really. She professed to be very sorry to hear it; but I could see that she didn't for a moment believe me. Probably she thought that we were after the child too, and wanted to bag the infant prodigy for ourselves, before she could get in her claim, thus depriving her of what she regarded almost as her feudal right. For, after all, weren't they her peasants? If anyone was to profit by adopting the child it ought to be herself.

Tactfully, diplomatically, she renewed her negotiations with Carlo. The boy, she put it to him, had genius. It was the foreign gentleman who had told her so, and he was the sort of man, clearly, who knew about such things. If Carlo would let her adopt the child, she'd have him trained. He'd become a great maestro and get engagements in the Argentine and the United States, in Paris and London. He'd earn millions and millions. Think of Caruso, for example. Part of the millions, she explained, would of course come to Carlo. But before they began to roll in, those millions, the boy would have to be trained. But training was very expensive.

## *Coming-of-Age in Our Time*

In his own interest, as well as in that of his son, he ought to let her take charge of the child. Carlo said he would think it over, and again applied to us for advice. We suggested that it would be best in any case to wait a little and see what progress the boy made.

He made, in spite of my assertions to Signora Bondi, excellent progress. Every afternoon, while Robin was asleep, he came for his concert and his lesson. He was getting along famously with his reading; his small fingers were acquiring strength and agility. But what to me was more interesting was that he had begun to make up little pieces on his own account. A few of them I took down as he played them and I have them still. Most of them, strangely enough, as I thought then, are canons. He had a passion for canons. When I explained to him the principles of the form he was enchanted.

"It is beautiful," he said, with admiration. "Beautiful, beautiful. And so easy!"

Again the word surprised me. The canon is not, after all, so conspicuously simple. Thenceforward he spent most of his time at the piano in working out little canons for his own amusement. They were often remarkably ingenious. But in the invention of other kinds of music he did not show himself so fertile as I had hoped. He composed and harmonized one or two solemn little airs like hymn tunes, with a few sprightlier pieces in the spirit of the military march. They were extraordinary, of course, as being the inventions of a child. But a great many children can do extraordinary things; we are all geniuses up to the age of ten. But I had hoped that Guido was a child who was going to be a genius at forty; in which case what was extraordinary for an ordinary child was not extraordinary enough

for him. "He's hardly a Mozart," we agreed, as we played his little pieces over. I felt, it must be confessed, almost aggrieved. Anything less than a Mozart, it seemed to me, was hardly worth thinking about.

He was not a Mozart. No. But he was somebody, as I was to find out, quite as extraordinary. It was one morning in the early summer that I made the discovery. I was sitting in the warm shade of our westward-facing balcony, working. Guido and Robin were playing in the little enclosed garden below. Absorbed in my work, it was only, I suppose, after the silence had prolonged itself a considerable time that I became aware that the children were making remarkably little noise. There was no shouting, no running about; only a quiet talking. Knowing by experience that when children are quiet it generally means that they are absorbed in some delicious mischief, I got up from my chair and looked over the balustrade to see what they were doing. I expected to catch them dabbling in water, making a bonfire, covering themselves with tar. But what I actually saw was Guido, with a burnt stick in his hand, demonstrating on the smooth paving-stones of the path, that the square on the hypotenuse of a right-angled triangle is equal to the sum of the squares on the other two sides.

Kneeling on the floor, he was drawing with the point of his blackened stick on the flagstones. And Robin, kneeling imitatively beside him, was growing, I could see, rather impatient with this very slow game.

"Guido," he said. But Guido paid no attention. Pensively frowning, he went on with his diagram. "Guido!" The younger child bent down and then craned round

his neck so as to look up into Guido's face. "Why don't you draw a train?"

"Afterwards," said Guido. "But I just want to show you this first. It's so beautiful," he added cajolingly.

"But I want a train," Robin persisted.

"In a moment. Do just wait a moment."

The tone was almost imploring. Robin armed himself with renewed patience. A minute later Guido had finished both his diagrams.

"There!" he said triumphantly, and straightened himself up to look at them. "Now I'll explain."

And he proceeded to prove the theorem of Pythagoras—not in Euclid's way, but by the simpler and more satisfying method which was, in all probability, employed by Pythagoras himself. He had drawn a square and dissected it, by a pair of crossed perpendiculars, into two squares and two equal rectangles. The equal rectangles he divided up by their diagonals into four equal right-angled triangles. The two squares are then seen to be the squares on the two sides of any one of these triangles other than the hypotenuse. So much for the first diagram. In the next he took the four right-angled triangles into which the rectangles had been divided and rearranged them round the original square so that their right angles filled the corners of the square, the hypotenuses looked inwards and the greater and less sides of the triangles were in continuation along the sides of the square (which are each equal to the sum of these sides). In this way the original square is redissected into four right-angled triangles and the square on the hypotenuse. The four triangles are equal to the two rectangles of the original dissection. Therefore the square on the hypotenuse is equal to the sum of the two squares—the squares on

the other two sides—into which, with the rectangles, the original square was first dissected.

In very untechnical language, but clearly and with a relentless logic, Guido expounded his proof. Robin listened, with an expression on his bright, freckled face of perfect incomprehension.

"Treno," he repeated from time to time. "Treno. Make a train."

"In a moment," Guido implored. "Wait a moment. But do just look at this. *Do*." He coaxed and cajoled. "It's so beautiful. It's so easy."

So easy. . . . The theorem of Pythagoras seemed to explain for me Guido's musical predilections. It was not an infant Mozart we had been cherishing; it was a little Archimedes with, like most of his kind, an incidental musical twist.

"Treno, treno!" shouted Robin, growing more and more restless as the exposition went on. And when Guido insisted on going on with his proof, he lost his temper. "Cattivo Guido," he shouted, and began to hit out at him with his fists.

"All right," said Guido resignedly. "I'll make a train." And with his stick of charcoal he began to scribble on the stones.

I looked on for a moment in silence. It was not a very good train. Guido might be able to invent for himself and prove the theorem of Pythagoras; but he was not much of a draughtsman.

"Guido!" I called. The two children turned and looked up. "Who taught you to draw those squares?" It was conceivable, of course, that somebody might have taught him.

"Nobody." He shook his head. Then, rather anxiously, as though he were afraid there might be something wrong about drawing squares, he went on to apologize and explain. "You see," he said, "it seemed

to me so beautiful. Because those squares"—he pointed at the two small squares in the first figure—"are just as big as this one." And, indicating the square on the hypotenuse in the second diagram, he looked up at me with a deprecating smile.

I nodded. "Yes, it's very beautiful," I said—"it's very beautiful indeed."

An expression of delighted relief appeared on his face; he laughed with pleasure. "You see, it's like this," he went on, eager to initiate me into the glorious secret he had discovered. "You cut these two long squares"—he meant the rectangles—"into two slices. And then there are four slices, all just the same, because, because—oh, I ought to have said that before—because these long squares are the same, because those lines, you see . . ."

"But I want a train," protested Robin.

Leaning on the rail of the balcony, I watched the children below. I thought of the extraordinary thing I had just seen and of what it meant.

I thought of the vast differences between human beings. We classify men by the color of their eyes and hair, the shape of their skulls. Would it not be more sensible to divide them up into intellectual species? There would be even wider gulfs between the extreme mental types than between a Bushman and a Scandinavian. This child, I thought, when he grows up, will be to me, intellectually, what a man is to a dog. And there are other men and women who are, perhaps, almost as dogs to me.

Perhaps the men of genius are the only true men. In all the history of the race there have been only a few thousand real men. And the rest of us—what are we? Teachable animals. Without the help of the real men, we should have found out almost nothing at all. Almost all the ideas

with which we are familiar could never have occurred to minds like ours. Plant the seeds there and they will grow; but our minds could never spontaneously have generated them.

There have been whole nations of dogs, I thought; whole epochs in which no Man was born. From the dull Egyptians the Greeks took crude experience and rules of thumb and made sciences. More than a thousand years passed before Archimedes had a comparable successor. There has been only one Buddha, one Jesus, only one Bach that we know of, one Michelangelo.

Is it by a mere chance, I wondered, that a Man is born from time to time? What causes a whole constellation of them to come contemporaneously into being and from out of a single people? Taine thought that Leonardo, Michelangelo, and Raphael were born when they were because the time was ripe for great painters and the Italian scene congenial. In the mouth of a rationalizing nineteenth-century Frenchman the doctrine is strangely mystical; it may be none the less true for that. But what of those born out of time? Blake, for example. What of those?

This child, I thought, has had the fortune to be born at a time when he will be able to make good use of his capacities. He will find the most elaborate analytical methods lying ready to his hand; he will have a prodigious experience behind him. Suppose him born while Stonehenge was building; he might have spent a lifetime discovering the rudiments, guessing darkly where now he might have had a chance of proving. Born at the time of the Norman Conquest, he would have had to wrestle with all the preliminary difficulties created by an inadequate symbolism; it would have taken him long years, for

## Young Archimedes

example, to learn the art of dividing MMMCCCLXXXVIII by MCMXIX. In five years, nowadays, he will learn what it took generations of Men to discover.

And I thought of the fate of all the men born so hopelessly out of time that they could achieve little or nothing of value. Beethoven born in Greece, I thought, would have had to be content to play thin melodies on the flute or lyre; in those intellectual surroundings it would hardly have been possible for him to imagine the nature of harmony.

From drawing trains, the children in the garden below had gone on to playing trains. They were trotting round and round; with blown round cheeks and pouting mouth, like the cherubic symbol of a wind, Robin puff-puffed, and Guido, holding the skirt of his smock, shuffled behind him, tooting. They ran forward, backed, stopped at imaginary stations, shunted, roared over bridges, crashed through tunnels, met with occasional collisions and derailments. The young Archimedes seemed to be just as happy as the little tow-headed barbarian. A few minutes ago he had been busy with the theorem of Pythagoras. Now, tooting indefatigably along imaginary rails, he was perfectly content to shuffle backwards and forwards among the flower-beds, between the pillars of the loggia, in and out of the dark tunnels of the laurel tree. The fact that one is going to be Archimedes does not prevent one from being an ordinary cheerful child meanwhile. I thought of this strange talent distinct and separate from the rest of the mind, independent, almost, of experience. The typical child-prodigies are musical and mathematical; the other talents ripen slowly under the influence of emotional experience and growth. Till he was thirty Balzac gave

proof of nothing but ineptitude; but at four the young Mozart was already a musician, and some of Pascal's most brilliant work was done before he was out of his teens.

In the weeks that followed, I alternated the daily piano lessons with lessons in mathematics. Hints rather than lessons they were; for I only made suggestions, indicated methods, and left the child himself to work out the ideas in detail. Thus I introduced him to algebra by showing him another proof of the theorem of Pythagoras. In this proof one drops a perpendicular from the right angle on to the hypotenuse, and arguing from the fact that the two triangles thus created are similar to one another and to the original triangle, and that the proportions which their corresponding sides bear to one another are therefore equal, one can show in algebraical form that  $c^2 + d^2$  (the squares on the other two sides) are equal to  $a^2 + b^2$  (the squares on the two segments of the hypotenuse) +  $2ab$ ; which last, it is easy to show geometrically, is equal to  $(a + b)^2$ , or the square on the hypotenuse. Guido was as much enchanted by the rudiments of algebra as he would have been if I had given him an engine worked by steam, with a methyated spirit lamp to heat the boiler; more enchanted, perhaps—for the engine would have got broken, and remaining always itself, would in any case have lost its charm, while the rudiments of algebra continued to grow and blossom in his mind with an unfailing luxuriance. Every day he made the discovery of something which seemed to him exquisitely beautiful; the new toy was inexhaustible in its potentialities.

In the intervals of applying algebra to the second book of Euclid, we experimented with circles; we stuck bamboos

### *Coming-of-Age in Our Time*

into the parched earth, measured their shadows at different hours of the day, and drew exciting conclusions from our observations. Sometimes, for fun, we cut and folded sheets of paper so as to make cubes and pyramids. One afternoon Guido arrived carrying carefully between his small and rather grubby hands a flimsy dodecahedron.

"E tanto bello!" he said, as he showed us his paper crystal; and when I asked him how he managed to make it, he merely smiled and said it had been so easy. I looked at Elizabeth and laughed. But it would have been more symbolically to the point, I felt, if I had gone down on all fours, wagged the spiritual outgrowth of my *os coccyx*, and barked my astonished admiration.

It was an uncommonly hot summer. By the beginning of July our little Robin, unaccustomed to these high temperatures, began to look pale and tired; he was listless, had lost his appetite and energy. The doctor advised mountain air. We decided to spend the next ten or twelve weeks in Switzerland. My parting gift to Guido was the first six books of Euclid in Italian. He turned over the pages, looked ecstatically at the figures.

"If only I knew how to read properly," he said. "I'm so stupid. But now I shall really try to learn."

From our hotel near Grindelwald we sent the child, in Robin's name, various post cards of cows, Alp-horns, Swiss chalets, edelweiss, and the like. We received no answers to these cards; but then we did not expect answers. Guido could not write, and there was no reason why his father or his sisters should take the trouble to write for him. No news, we took it,

was good news. And then one day, early in September, there arrived at the hotel a strange letter. The manager had it stuck up on the glass-fronted notice-board in the hall, so that all the guests might see it, and whoever conscientiously thought that it belonged to him might claim it. Passing the board on the way in to lunch, Elizabeth stopped to look at it.

"But it must be from Guido," she said.

I came and looked at the envelope over her shoulder. It was unstamped and black with postmarks. Traced out in pencil, the big uncertain capital letters sprawled across its face. In the first line was written: AL BABBO DI ROBIN, and there followed a travestied version of the name of the hotel and the place. Round the address bewildered postal officials had scrawled suggested emendations. The letter had wandered for a fortnight at least, back and forth across the face of Europe.

"Al Babbo di Robin. To Robin's father." I laughed. "Pretty smart of the postmen to have got it here at all." I went to the manager's office, set forth the justice of my claim to the letter and, having paid the fifty-centime surcharge for the missing stamp, had the case unlocked and the letter given me. We went in to lunch.

"The writing's magnificent," we agreed, laughing, as we examined the address at close quarters. "Thanks to Euclid," I added. "That's what comes of pandering to the ruling passion."

But when I opened the envelope and looked at its contents I no longer laughed. The letter was brief and almost telegraphical in style. "SONO DALLA PADRONA," it ran, "NON MI PIACE HA RUBATO IL MIO LIBRO NON VOGLIO SUONARE PIU VOGLIO TORNARE A CASA VENGA SUBITO GUIDO."<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> I am at the Padrona's—I don't like it—she has stolen my book—I don't want to play [the piano] any more—I want to return home—come quickly—Guido.

"What is it?"

I handed Elizabeth the letter. "That blasted woman's got hold of him," I said.

Busts of men in Homburg hats, angels bathed in marble tears extinguishing torches, statues of little girls, cherubs, veiled figures, allegories and ruthless realisms—the strangest and most diverse idols beckoned and gesticulated as we passed. Printed indelibly on tin and embedded in the living rock, the brown photographs looked out, under glass, from the humbler crosses, headstones, and broken pillars. Dead ladies in the cubistic geometrical fashions of thirty years ago—two cones of black satin meeting point to point at the waist, and the arms: a sphere to the elbow, a polished cylinder below—smiled mournfully out of their marble frames; the smiling faces, the white hands, were the only recognizably human things that emerged from the solid geometry of their clothes. Men with black mustaches, men with white beards, young clean-shaven men, stared or averted their gaze to show a Roman profile. Children in their stiff best opened wide their eyes, smiled hopefully in anticipation of the little bird that was to issue from the camera's muzzle, smiled skeptically in the knowledge that it wouldn't, smiled laboriously and obediently because they had been told to. In spiky Gothic cottages of marble the richer dead privately reposed; through grilled doors one caught a glimpse of pale Inconsolables weeping, of distraught Geniuses guarding the secret of the tomb. The less prosperous sections of the majority slept in communities, close-crowded but elegantly housed under smooth continuous marble floors, whose every flagstone was the mouth of a separate grave.

These continental cemeteries, I thought, as Carlo and I made our way among the dead, are more frightful than ours, because these people pay more attention to their dead than we do. That primordial cult of corpses, that tender solicitude for their material well-being, which led the ancients to house their dead in stone, while they themselves lived between wattle and under thatch, still lingers here; persists, I thought, more vigorously than with us. There are a hundred gesticulating statues here for every one in an English graveyard. There are more family vaults, more "luxuriously appointed" (as they say of liners and hotels) than one would find at home. And embedded in every tombstone there are photographs to remind the powdered bones within what form they will have to resume on the Day of Judgment; beside each are little hanging lamps to burn optimistically on All Souls' Day. To the Man who built the Pyramids they are nearer, I thought, than we.

"If I had known," Carlo kept repeating, "if only I had known." His voice came to me through my reflections as though from a distance. "At the time he didn't mind at all. How should I have known that he would take it so much to heart afterwards? And she deceived me, she lied to me."

I assured him yet once more that it wasn't his fault. Though, of course, it was, in part. It was mine too, in part; I ought to have thought of the possibility and somehow guarded against it. And he shouldn't have let the child go, even temporarily and on trial, even though the woman was bringing pressure to bear on him. And the pressure had been considerable. They had worked on the same holding for more than a hundred years, the



men of Carlo's family; and now she had made the old man threaten to turn him out. It would be a dreadful thing to leave the place; and besides, another place wasn't so easy to find. It was made quite plain, however, that he could stay if he let her have the child. Only for a little to begin with; just to see how he got on. There would be no compulsion whatever on him to stay if he didn't like it. And it would be all to Guido's advantage; and to his father's, too, in the end. All that the Englishman had said about his not being such a good musician as he had thought at first was obviously untrue—mere jealousy and little-mindedness: the man wanted to take credit for Guido himself, that was all. And the boy, it was obvious, would learn nothing from him. What he needed was a real good professional master.

All the energy that, if the physicists had known their business, would have been driving dynamos, went into this campaign. It began the moment we were out of the house, intensively. She would have more chance of success, the Signora doubtless thought, if we weren't there. And besides, it was essential to take the opportunity when it offered itself and get hold of the child before we could make our bid—for it was obvious to her that we wanted Guido just as much as she did.

Day after day she renewed the assault. At the end of a week she sent her husband to complain about the state of the vines: they were in a shocking condition; he had decided, or very nearly decided, to give Carlo notice. Meekly, shamefacedly, in obedience to higher orders, the old gentleman uttered his threats. Next day Signora Bondi returned to the attack. The padrone, she declared, had been in a towering passion; but she'd do her best, her

very best, to mollify him. And after a significant pause she went on to talk about Guido.

In the end Carlo gave in. The woman was too persistent and she held too many trump cards. The child could go and stay with her for a month or two on trial. After that, if he really expressed a desire to remain with her, she could formally adopt him.

At the idea of going for a holiday to the seaside—and it was to the seaside, Signora Bondi told him, that they were going—Guido was pleased and excited. He had heard a lot about the sea from Robin. "Tanta acqua!" It had sounded almost too good to be true. And now he was actually to go and see this marvel. It was very cheerfully that he parted from his family.

But after the holiday by the sea was over, and Signora Bondi had brought him back to her town house in Florence, he began to be homesick. The Signora, it was true, treated him exceedingly kindly, bought him new clothes, took him out to tea in the Via Tornabuoni and filled him up with cakes, iced strawberryade, whipped cream, and chocolates. But she made him practice the piano more than he liked, and what was worse, she took away his Euclid, on the score that he wasted too much time with it. And when he said that he wanted to go home, she put him off with promises and excuses and downright lies. She told him that she couldn't take him at once, but that next week, if he were good and worked hard at his piano meanwhile, next week . . . And when the time came she told him that his father didn't want him back. And she redoubled her petting, gave him expensive presents, and stuffed him with yet unhealthier foods. To no purpose. Guido didn't like his new life, didn't want to

practice scales, pined for his book, and longed to be back with his brothers and sisters. Signora Bondi, meanwhile, continued to hope that time and chocolates would eventually make the child hers; and to keep his family at a distance, she wrote to Carlo every few days letters which still purported to come from the seaside (she took the trouble to send them to a friend, who posted them back again to Florence), and in which she painted the most charming picture of Guido's happiness.

It was then that Guido wrote his letter to me. Abandoned, as he supposed, by his family—for that they shouldn't take the trouble to come to see him when they were so near was only to be explained on the hypothesis that they really had given him up—he must have looked to me as his last and only hope. And the letter, with its fantastic address, had been nearly a fortnight on its way. A fortnight—it must have seemed hundreds of years; and as the centuries succeeded one another, gradually, no doubt, the poor child became convinced that I too had abandoned him. There was no hope left.

"Here we are," said Carlo.

I looked up and found myself confronted by an enormous monument. In a kind of grotto hollowed in the flanks of a monolith of gray sandstone, Sacred Love, in bronze, was embracing a funerary urn. And in bronze letters riveted into the stone was a long legend to the effect that the inconsolable Ernesto Bondi had raised this monument to the memory of his beloved wife, Annunziata, as a token of his undying love for one whom, snatched from him by a premature death, he hoped very soon to join beneath this stone. The first Signora Bondi had died in 1912. I thought of the old man leashed to his

white dog; he must always, I reflected, have been a most uxorious husband.

"They buried him here."

We stood there for a long time in silence. I felt the tears coming into my eyes as I thought of the poor child lying there underground. I thought of those luminous grave eyes, and the curve of that beautiful forehead, the droop of the melancholy mouth, of the expression of delight which illumined his face when he learned of some new idea that pleased him, when he heard a piece of music that he liked. And this beautiful small being was dead; and the spirit that inhabited this form, the amazing spirit, that too had been destroyed almost before it had begun to exist.

And the unhappiness that must have preceded the final act, the child's despair, the conviction of his utter abandonment—those were terrible to think of, terrible.

"I think we had better come away now," I said at last, and touched Carlo on the arm. He was standing there like a blind man, his eyes shut, his face slightly lifted towards the light; from between his closed eyelids the tears welled out, hung for a moment, and trickled down his cheeks. His lips trembled and I could see that he was making an effort to keep them still. "Come away," I repeated.

The face which had been still in its sorrow, was suddenly convulsed; he opened his eyes, and through the tears they were bright with a violent anger. "I shall kill her," he said, "I shall kill her. When I think of him throwing himself out, falling through the air . . ." With his two hands he made a violent gesture, bringing them down from over his head and arresting them with a sudden jerk when they were on a level with his breast. "And then crash." He shuddered. "She's as much

## Coming-of-Age in Our Time

responsible as though she had pushed him down herself. I shall kill her." He clenched his teeth.

To be angry is easier than to be sad, less painful. It is comforting to think of revenge. "Don't talk like that," I said. "It's no good. It's stupid. And what would be the point?" He had had those fits before, when grief became too painful and he had tried to escape from it. Anger had been the easiest way of escape. I had had, before this, to persuade him back into the harder path of grief. "It's stupid to talk like that," I repeated, and I led him away through the ghastly labyrinth of tombs, where death seemed more terrible even than it is.

By the time we had left the cemetery, and were walking down from San Miniato towards the Piazzale Michelangelo be-

low, he had become calmer. His anger had subsided again into sorrow from which it had derived all its strength and its bitterness. In the Piazzale we halted for a moment to look down at the city in the valley below us. It was a day of floating clouds—great shapes, white, golden, and gray; and between them patches of a thin, transparent blue. Its lantern level, almost, with our eyes, the dome of the cathedral revealed itself in all its grandiose lightness, its vastness and aerial strength. On the innumerable brown and rosy roofs of the city the afternoon sunlight lay softly, sumptuously, and the towers were as though varnished and enameled with an old gold. I thought of all the Men who had lived here and left the visible traces of their spirit and conceived extraordinary things, I thought of the dead child.

## ARABY

by JAMES JOYCE

NORTH RICHMOND STREET, being blind, was a quiet street except at the hour when the Christian Brothers' School set the boys free. An uninhabited house of two stories stood at the blind end, detached from its neighbors in a square ground. The other houses of the street, conscious of decent lives within them, gazed at one another with brown imperturbable faces.

The former tenant of our house, a priest, had died in the back drawing room. Air, musty from having been long enclosed, hung in all the rooms, and the waste room behind the kitchen was littered with old useless papers. Among these I found a few paper-covered books, the pages of

which were curled and damp: *The Abbot*, by Walter Scott, *The Devout Communicant*, and *The Memoirs of Vidocq*. I liked the last best because its leaves were yellow. The wild garden behind the house contained a central apple tree and a few straggling bushes under one of which I found the late tenant's rusty bicycle pump. He had been a very charitable priest; in his will he had left all his money to institutions and the furniture of his house to his sister.

When the short days of winter came dusk fell before we had well eaten our dinners. When we met in the street the houses had grown somber. The space of

From *Dubliners* by James Joyce. By permission of The Viking Press, Inc., New York.

sky above us was the color of ever-changing violet and towards it the lamps of the street lifted their feeble lanterns. The cold air stung us and we played till our bodies glowed. Our shouts echoed in the silent street. The career of our play brought us through the dark muddy lanes behind the houses where we ran the gauntlet of the rough tribes from the cottages, to the back doors of the dark dripping gardens where odors arose from the ashpits, to the dark odorous stables where a coachman smoothed and combed the horse or shook music from the buckled harness. When we returned to the street, light from the kitchen windows had filled the areas. If my uncle was seen turning the corner we hid in the shadow until we had seen him safely housed. Or if Mangan's sister came out on the doorstep to call her brother in to his tea we watched her from our shadow peer up and down the street. We waited to see whether she would remain or go in and, if she remained, we left our shadow and walked up to Mangan's steps resignedly. She was waiting for us, her figure defined by the light from the half-opened door. Her brother always teased her before he obeyed and I stood by the railings looking at her. Her dress swung as she moved her body and the soft rope of her hair tossed from side to side.

Every morning I lay on the floor in the front parlor watching her door. The blind was pulled down to within an inch of the sash so that I could not be seen. When she came out on the doorstep my heart leaped. I ran to the hall, seized my books and followed her. I kept her brown figure always in my eye and, when we came near the point at which our ways diverged, I quickened my pace and passed her. This happened morning after morn-

ing. I had never spoken to her, except for a few casual words, and yet her name was like a summons to all my foolish blood.

Her image accompanied me even in places the most hostile to romance. On Saturday evenings when my aunt went marketing I had to go to carry some of the parcels. We walked through the flaring streets, jostled by drunken men and bargaining women, amid the curses of laborers, the shrill litanies of shop boys who stood on guard by the barrels of pigs' cheeks, the nasal chanting of street singers, who sang a *come-all-you* about O'Donovan Rossa, or a ballad about the troubles in our native land. These noises converged in a single sensation of life for me: I imagined that I bore my chalice safely through a throng of foes. Her name sprang to my lips at moments in strange prayers and praises which I myself did not understand. My eyes were often full of tears (I could not tell why) and at times a flood from my heart seemed to pour itself out into my bosom. I thought little of the future. I did not know whether I would ever speak to her or not or, if I spoke to her, how I could tell her of my confused adoration. But my body was like a harp and her words and gestures were like fingers running upon the wires.

One evening I went into the back drawing room in which the priest had died. It was a dark rainy evening and there was no sound in the house. Through one of the broken panes I heard the rain impinge upon the earth, the fine incessant needles of water playing in the sodden beds. Some distant lamp or lighted window gleamed below me. I was thankful that I could see so little. All my senses seemed to desire to veil themselves and, feeling that I was

## Coming-of-Age in Our Time

about to slip from them, I pressed the palms of my hands together until they trembled, murmuring: "O love! O love!" many times.

At last she spoke to me. When she addressed the first words to me I was so confused that I did not know what to answer. She asked me was I going to *Araby*. I forgot whether I answered yes or no. It would be a splendid bazaar, she said; she would love to go.

"And why can't you?" I asked.

While she spoke she turned a silver bracelet round and round her wrist. She could not go, she said, because there would be a retreat that week in her convent. Her brother and two other boys were fighting for their caps and I was alone at the railings. She held one of the spikes, bowing her head towards me. The light from the lamp opposite our door caught the white curve of her neck, lit up her hair that rested there and, falling, lit up the hand upon the railing. It fell over one side of her dress and caught the white border of a petticoat, just visible as she stood at ease.

"It's well for you," she said.

"If I go," I said, "I will bring you something."

What innumerable follies laid waste my waking and sleeping thoughts after that evening! I wished to annihilate the tedious intervening days. I chafed against the work of school. At night in my bedroom and by day in the classroom her image came between me and the page I strove to read. The syllables of the word *Araby* were called to me through the silence in which my soul luxuriated and cast an Eastern enchantment over me. I asked for leave to go to the bazaar on Saturday night. My aunt was surprised and hoped it was not some Freemason affair. I an-

swered few questions in class. I watched my master's face pass from amiability to sternness; he hoped I was not beginning to idle. I could not call my wandering thoughts together. I had hardly any patience with the serious work of life which, now that it stood between me and my desire, seemed to me child's play, ugly monotonous child's play.

On Saturday morning I reminded my uncle that I wished to go to the bazaar in the evening. He was fussing at the hall stand, looking for the hat brush, and answered me curtly:

"Yes, boy, I know."

As he was in the hall I could not go into the front parlor and lie at the window. I left the house in bad humor and walked slowly towards the school. The air was pitilessly raw and already my heart misgave me.

When I came home to dinner my uncle had not yet been home. Still it was early. I sat staring at the clock for some time and, when its ticking began to irritate me, I left the room. I mounted the staircase and gained the upper part of the house. The high cold empty gloomy rooms liberated me and I went from room to room singing. From the front window I saw my companions playing below in the street. Their cries reached me weakened and indistinct and, leaning my forehead against the cool glass, I looked over at the dark house where she lived. I may have stood there for an hour, seeing nothing but the brown-clad figure cast by my imagination, touched discreetly by the lamplight at the curved neck, at the hand upon the railings and at the border below the dress.

When I came downstairs again I found Mrs. Mercer sitting at the fire. She was an

old garrulous woman, a pawnbroker's widow, who collected used stamps for some pious purpose. I had to endure the gossip of the tea table. The meal was prolonged beyond an hour and still my uncle did not come. Mrs. Mercer stood up to go: she was sorry she couldn't wait any longer, but it was after eight o'clock and she did not like to be out late, as the night air was bad for her. When she had gone I began to walk up and down the room, clenching my fists. My aunt said:

"I'm afraid you may put off your bazaar for this night of Our Lord."

At nine o'clock I heard my uncle's latch-key in the hall door. I heard him talking to himself and heard the hall stand rocking when it had received the weight of his overcoat. I could interpret these signs. When he was midway through his dinner I asked him to give me the money to go to the bazaar. He had forgotten.

"The people are in bed and after their first sleep now," he said.

I did not smile. My aunt said to him energetically:

"Can't you give him the money and let him go? You've kept him late enough as it is."

My uncle said he was very sorry he had forgotten. He said he believed in the old saying: "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy." He asked me where I was going and, when I had told him a second time he asked me did I know *The Arab's Farewell to His Steed*. When I left the kitchen he was about to recite the opening lines of the piece to my aunt.

I held a florin tightly in my hand as I strode down Buckingham Street towards the station. The sight of the streets thronged with buyers and glaring with gas recalled to me the purpose of my

journey. I took my seat in a third-class carriage of a deserted train. After an intolerable delay the train moved out of the station slowly. It crept onward among ruinous houses and over the twinkling river. At Westland Row Station a crowd of people pressed to the carriage doors; but the porters moved them back, saying that it was a special train for the bazaar. I remained alone in the bare carriage. In a few minutes the train drew up beside an improvised wooden platform. I passed out on to the road and saw by the lighted dial of a clock that it was ten minutes to ten. In front of me was a large building which displayed the magical name.

I could not find any sixpenny entrance and, fearing that the bazaar would be closed, I passed in quickly through a turnstile, handing a shilling to a weary-looking man. I found myself in a big hall girdled at half its height by a gallery. Nearly all the stalls were closed and the greater part of the hall was in darkness. I recognized a silence like that which pervades a church after a service. I walked into the center of the bazaar timidly. A few people were gathered about the stalls which were still open. Before a curtain, over which the words *Café Chantant* were written in colored lamps, two men were counting money on a salver. I listened to the fall of the coins.

Remembering with difficulty why I had come I went over to one of the stalls and examined porcelain vases and flowered tea sets. At the door of the stall a young lady was talking and laughing with two young gentlemen. I remarked their English accents and listened vaguely to their conversation.

"O, I never said such a thing!"

"O, but you did!"

## *Coming-of-Age in Our Time*

"O, but I didn't!"

"Didn't she say that?"

"Yes. I heard her."

"O, there's a . . . fib!"

Observing me, the young lady came over and asked me did I wish to buy anything. The tone of her voice was not encouraging; she seemed to have spoken to me out of a sense of duty. I looked humbly at the great jars that stood like eastern guards at either side of the dark entrance to the stall and murmured:

"No, thank you."

The young lady changed the position of one of the vases and went back to the two young men. They began to talk of the

same subject. Once or twice the young lady glanced at me over her shoulder.

I lingered before her stall, though I knew my stay was useless, to make my interest in her wares seem the more real. Then I turned away slowly and walked down the middle of the bazaar. I allowed the two pennies to fall against the sixpence in my pocket. I heard a voice call from one end of the gallery that the light was out. The upper part of the hall was now completely dark.

Gazing up into the darkness I saw myself as a creature driven and derided by vanity; and my eyes burned with anguish and anger.

## SOPHISTICATION

by SHERWOOD ANDERSON

IT WAS EARLY EVENING of a day in the late fall and the Winesburg County Fair had brought crowds of country people into town. The day had been clear and the night came on warm and pleasant. On the Trunion Pike, where the road after it left town stretched away between berry fields now covered with dry brown leaves, the dust from passing wagons arose in clouds. Children, curled into little balls, slept on the straw scattered on wagon beds. Their hair was full of dust and their fingers black and sticky. The dust rolled away over the fields and the departing sun set it ablaze with colors.

In the main street of Winesburg crowds filled the stores and the sidewalks. Night came on, horses whinnied, the clerks in the stores ran madly about, children became lost and cried lustily, an American

town worked terribly at the task of amusing itself.

Pushing his way through the crowds in Main Street, young George Willard concealed himself in the stairway leading to Doctor Reefy's office and looked at the people. With feverish eyes he watched the faces drifting past under the store lights. Thoughts kept coming into his head and he did not want to think. He stamped impatiently on the wooden steps and looked sharply about. "Well, is she going to stay with him all day? Have I done all this waiting for nothing?" he muttered.

George Willard, the Ohio village boy, was fast growing into manhood and new thoughts had been coming into his mind. All that day, amid the jam of people at the Fair, he had gone about feeling lonely. He was about to leave Winesburg to go

From *Winesburg, Ohio* by Sherwood Anderson. Copyright 1919 by B. W. Huebsch. Reprinted by permission of The Viking Press, Inc., New York.

away to some city where he hoped to get work on a city newspaper and he felt grown up. The mood that had taken possession of him was a thing known to men and unknown to boys. He felt old and a little tired. Memories awoke in him. To his mind his new sense of maturity set him apart, made of him a half-tragic figure. He wanted someone to understand the feeling that had taken possession of him after his mother's death.

There is a time in the life of every boy when he for the first time takes the backward view of life. Perhaps that is the moment when he crosses the line into manhood. The boy is walking through the street of his town. He is thinking of the future and of the figure he will cut in the world. Ambitions and regrets awake within him. Suddenly something happens; he stops under a tree and waits as for a voice calling his name. Ghosts of old things creep into his consciousness; the voices outside of himself whisper a message concerning the limitations of life. From being quite sure of himself and his future he becomes not at all sure. If he be an imaginative boy a door is torn open and for the first time he looks out upon the world, seeing, as though they marched in procession before him, the countless figures of men who before his time have come out of nothingness into the world, lived their lives and again disappeared into nothingness. The sadness of sophistication has come to the boy. With a little gasp he sees himself as merely a leaf blown by the wind through the streets of his village. He knows that in spite of all the stout talk of his fellows he must live and die in uncertainty, a thing blown by the winds, a thing destined like corn to wilt in the sun. He shivers and looks

eagerly about. The eighteen years he has lived seem but a moment, a breathing space in the long march of humanity. Already he hears death calling. With all his heart he wants to come close to some other human, touch someone with his hands, be touched by the hand of another. If he prefers that the other be a woman, that is because he believes that a woman will be gentle, that she will understand. He wants, most of all, understanding.

When the moment of sophistication came to George Willard, his mind turned to Helen White, the Winesburg banker's daughter. Always he had been conscious of the girl growing into womanhood as he grew into manhood. Once on a summer night when he was eighteen, he had walked with her on a country road and in her presence had given way to an impulse to boast, to make himself appear big and significant in her eyes. Now he wanted to see her for another purpose. He wanted to tell her of the new impulses that had come to him. He had tried to make her think of him as a man when he knew nothing of manhood and now he wanted to be with her and to try to make her feel the change he believed had taken place in his nature.

As for Helen White, she also had come to a period of change. What George felt, she in her young woman's way felt also. She was no longer a girl and hungered to reach into the grace and beauty of womanhood. She had come home from Cleveland, where she was attending college, to spend a day at the Fair. She also had begun to have memories. During the day she sat in the grandstand with a young man, one of the instructors from the college, who was a guest of her mother's. The young man was of a pedantic



## *Coming-of-Age in Our Time*

turn of mind and she felt at once he would not do for her purpose. At the Fair she was glad to be seen in his company as he was well dressed and a stranger. She knew that the fact of his presence would create an impression. During the day she was happy, but when night came on she began to grow restless. She wanted to drive the instructor away, to get out of his presence. While they sat together in the grandstand and while the eyes of former schoolmates were upon them, she paid so much attention to her escort that he grew interested. "A scholar needs money. I should marry a woman with money," he mused.

Helen White was thinking of George Willard even as he wandered gloomily through the crowds thinking of her. She remembered the summer evening when they had walked together and wanted to walk with him again. She thought that the months she had spent in the city, the going to theaters and the seeing of great crowds wandering in lighted thoroughfares, had changed her profoundly. She wanted him to feel and be conscious of the change in her nature.

The summer evening together that had left its mark on the memory of both the young man and woman had, when looked at quite sensibly, been rather stupidly spent. They had walked out of town along a country road. Then they had stopped by a fence near a field of young corn and George had taken off his coat and let it hang on his arm. "Well, I've stayed here in Winesburg—yes—I've not yet gone away but I'm growing up," he said. "I've been reading books and I've been thinking. I'm going to try to amount to something in life.

"Well," he explained, "that isn't the point. Perhaps I'd better quit talking."

The confused boy put his hand on the girl's arm. His voice trembled. The two started to walk back along the road to town. In his desperation George boasted, "I'm going to be a big man, the biggest that ever lived here in Winesburg," he declared. "I want you to do something, I don't know what. Perhaps it is none of my business. I want you to try to be different from other women. You see the point. It's none of my business I tell you. I want you to be a beautiful woman. You see what I want."

The boy's voice failed and in silence the two came back into town and went along the street to Helen White's house. At the gate he tried to say something impressive. Speeches he had thought out came into his head, but they seemed utterly pointless. "I thought—I used to think—I had it in my mind you would marry Seth Richmond. Now I know you won't," was all he could find to say as she went through the gate and toward the door of her house.

On the warm fall evening as he stood in the stairway and looked at the crowd drifting through Main Street, George thought of the talk beside the field of young corn and was ashamed of the figure he had made of himself. In the street the people surged up and down like cattle confined in a pen. Buggies and wagons almost filled the narrow thoroughfare. A band played and small boys raced along the sidewalk, diving between the legs of men. Young men with shining red faces walked awkwardly about with girls on their arms. In a room above one of the stores, where a dance was to be held, the fiddlers tuned their instruments. The broken sounds floated down through an open window and out across the murmur of voices and the loud blare of the horns of the band.

The medley of sounds got on young Willard's nerves. Everywhere, on all sides, the sense of crowding, moving life closed in about him. He wanted to run away by himself and think. "If she wants to stay with that fellow she may. Why should I care? What difference does it make to me?" he growled and went along Main Street and through Hern's grocery into a side street.

George felt so utterly lonely and dejected that he wanted to weep but pride made him walk rapidly along, swinging his arms. He came to Westley Moyer's livery barn and stopped in the shadows to listen to a group of men who talked of a race Westley's stallion, Tony Tip, had won at the Fair during the afternoon. A crowd had gathered in front of the barn and before the crowd walked Westley, prancing up and down and boasting. He held a whip in his hand and kept tapping the ground. Little puffs of dust arose in the lamplight. "Hell, quit your talking," Westley exclaimed. "I wasn't afraid, I knew I had 'em beat all the time. I wasn't afraid."

Ordinarily George Willard would have been intensely interested in the boasting of Moyer, the horseman. Now it made him angry. He turned and hurried away along the street. "Old windbag," he sputtered. "Why does he want to be bragging? Why don't he shut up?"

George went into a vacant lot and as he hurried along, fell over a pile of rubbish. A nail protruding from an empty barrel tore his trousers. He sat down on the ground and swore. With a pin he mended the torn place and then arose and went on. "I'll go to Helen White's house, that's what I'll do. I'll walk right in. I'll say that I want to see her. I'll walk right in and

sit down, that's what I'll do," he declared, climbing over a fence and beginning to run.

On the veranda of Banker White's house Helen was restless and distraught. The instructor sat between the mother and daughter. His talk wearied the girl. Although he had also been raised in an Ohio town, the instructor began to put on the airs of the city. He wanted to appear cosmopolitan. "I like the chance you have given me to study the background out of which most of our girls come," he declared. "It was good of you, Mrs. White, to have me down for the day." He turned to Helen and laughed. "Your life is still bound up with the life of this town?" he asked. "There are people here in whom you are interested?" To the girl his voice sounded pompous and heavy.

Helen arose and went into the house. At the door leading to a garden at the back she stopped and stood listening. Her mother began to talk. "There is no one here fit to associate with a girl of Helen's breeding," she said.

Helen ran down a flight of stairs at the back of the house and into the garden. In the darkness she stopped and stood trembling. It seemed to her that the world was full of meaningless people saying words. Afire with eagerness she ran through a garden gate and turning a corner by the banker's barn, went into a little side street. "George! Where are you, George?" she cried, filled with nervous excitement. She stopped running, and leaned against a tree to laugh hysterically. Along the dark little street came George Willard, still saying words. "I'm going to walk right into her house. I'll go right in and sit down," he declared as he came up to her. He stopped

## *Coming-of-Age in Our Time*

and stared stupidly. "Come on," he said and took hold of her hand. With hanging heads they walked away along the street under the trees. Dry leaves rustled under foot. Now that he had found her George wondered what he had better do and say.

At the upper end of the fair ground, in Winesburg, there is a half decayed old grandstand. It has never been painted and the boards are all warped out of shape. The fair ground stands on top of a low hill rising out of the valley of Wine Creek and from the grandstand one can see at night, over a cornfield, the lights of the town reflected against the sky.

George and Helen climbed the hill to the fair ground, coming by the path past Waterworks Pond. The feeling of loneliness and isolation that had come to the young man in the crowded streets of his town was both broken and intensified by the presence of Helen. What he felt was reflected in her.

In youth there are always two forces fighting in people. The warm unthinking little animal struggles against the thing that reflects and remembers, and the older, the more sophisticated thing had possession of George Willard. Sensing his mood, Helen walked beside him filled with respect. When they got to the grandstand they climbed up under the roof and sat down on one of the long bench-like seats.

There is something memorable in the experience to be had by going into a fair ground that stands at the edge of a Middle Western town on a night after the annual fair has been held. The sensation is one never to be forgotten. On all sides are ghosts, not of the dead, but of living people. Here, during the day just passed, have come the people pouring in from

the town and the country around. Farmers with their wives and children and all the people from the hundreds of little frame houses have gathered within these board walls. Young girls have laughed and men with beards have talked of the affairs of their lives. The place has been filled to overflowing with life. It has itched and squirmed with life and now it is night and the life has all gone away. The silence is almost terrifying. One conceals oneself standing silently beside the trunk of a tree and what there is of a reflective tendency in his nature is intensified. One shudders at the thought of the meaninglessness of life while at the same instant, and if the people of the town are his people, one loves life so intensely that tears come into the eyes.

In the darkness under the roof of the grandstand, George Willard sat beside Helen White and felt very keenly his own insignificance in the scheme of existence. Now that he had come out of town where the presence of the people stirring about, busy with a multitude of affairs, had been so irritating the irritation was all gone. The presence of Helen renewed and refreshed him. It was as though her woman's hand was assisting him to make some minute readjustment of the machinery of his life. He began to think of the people in the town where he had always lived with something like reverence. He had reverence for Helen. He wanted to love and to be loved by her, but he did not want at the moment to be confused by her womanhood. In the darkness he took hold of her hand and when she crept close put a hand on her shoulder. A wind began to blow and he shivered. With all his strength he tried to hold and to understand the mood that had come

## *Sophistication*

upon him. In that high place in the darkness the two oddly sensitive human atoms held each other tightly and waited. In the mind of each was that same thought. "I have come to this lonely place and here is this other," was the substance of the thing felt.

In Winesburg the crowded day had run itself out into the long night of the late fall. Farm horses jogged away along lonely country roads pulling their portion of weary people. Clerks began to bring samples of goods in off the sidewalk and lock the doors of stores. In the Opera House a crowd had gathered to see a show and further down Main Street the fiddlers, their instruments tuned, sweated and worked to keep the feet of youth flying over a dance floor.

In the darkness of the grandstand Helen White and George Willard remained silent. Now and then the spell that held them was broken and they turned and tried in the dim light to see into each other's eyes. They kissed but that impulse did not last. At the upper end of the fair ground a half dozen men worked over horses that had raced during the afternoon. The men had built a fire and were heating kettles of water. Only their legs could be seen as they passed back and forth in the light. When the wind blew the little flames of the fire danced crazily about.

George and Helen arose and walked away into the darkness. They went along a path past a field of corn that had not yet been cut. The wind whispered among the

dry corn blades. For a moment during the walk back into town the spell that held them was broken. When they had come to the crest of Waterworks Hill they stopped by a tree and George again put his hands on the girl's shoulders. She embraced him eagerly and then again they drew quickly back from that impulse. They stopped kissing and stood a little apart. Mutual respect grew big in them. They were both embarrassed and to relieve their embarrassment dropped into the animalism of youth. They laughed and began to pull and haul at each other. In some way chastened and purified by the mood they had been in they became, not man and woman, not boy and girl, but excited little animals.

It was so they went down the hill. In the darkness they played like two splendid young things in a young world. Once, running swiftly forward, Helen tripped George and he fell. He squirmed and shouted. Shaking with laughter, he rolled down the hill. Helen ran after him. For just a moment she stopped in the darkness. There is no way of knowing what woman's thoughts went through her mind but, when the bottom of the hill was reached and she came up to the boy, she took his arm and walked beside him in dignified silence. For some reason they could not have explained they had both got from their silent evening together the thing needed. Man or boy, woman or girl, they had for a moment taken hold of the thing that makes the mature life of men and women in the modern world possible.

## WHEN I WAS ONE-AND-TWENTY

by A. E. HOUSMAN

When I was one-and-twenty  
I heard a wise man say,  
"Give crowns and pounds and guineas  
But not your heart away;  
Give pearls away and rubies  
But keep your fancy free."  
But I was one-and-twenty,  
No use to talk to me.

When I was one-and-twenty  
I heard him say again,  
"The heart out of the bosom  
Was never given in vain;  
'Tis paid with sighs a plenty  
And sold for endless rue."  
And I am two-and-twenty,  
And oh, 'tis true, 'tis true.

## REVEILLE

by A. E. HOUSMAN

Wake: the silver dusk returning  
Up the beach of darkness brims,  
And the ship of sunrise burning  
Strands upon the eastern rims.

Wake: the vaulted shadow shatters,  
Trampled to the floor it spanned,  
And the tent of night in tatters  
Straws the sky-pavilioned land.

Up, lad, up, 'tis late for lying:  
Hear the drums of morning play;  
Hark, the empty highways crying  
"Who'll beyond the hills away?"

Towns and countries woo together,  
Forelands beacon, belfries call;  
Never lad that trod on leather  
Lived to feast his heart with all.

Up, lad: thews that lie and cumber  
Sunlit pallets never thrive;  
Morns abed and daylight slumber  
Were not meant for man alive.

Clay lies still, but blood's a rover;  
Breath's a ware that will not keep.  
Up, lad: when the journey's over  
There'll be time enough to sleep.

## LOVELIEST OF TREES, THE CHERRY NOW

by A. E. HOUSMAN

Loveliest of trees, the cherry now  
Is hung with bloom along the bough,  
And stands about the woodland ride  
Wearing white for Eastertide.

Now, of my threescore years and ten,  
Twenty will not come again,

And take from seventy springs a score,  
It only leaves me fifty more.

And since to look at things in bloom  
Fifty springs are little room,  
About the woodlands I will go  
To see the cherry hung with snow.

These poems from A. E. Housman, *A Shropshire Lad*, Henry Holt and Company, Inc.

# MEMOIR OF WILFRED OWEN (1893–Nov. 4, 1918)

by EDMUND BLUNDEN

## THE SEED

[by WILFRED OWEN]

War broke. And now the winter of the world  
With perishing great darkness closes in.  
The cyclone of the pressure on Berlin  
Is over all the width of Europe whirled,  
Rending the sails of progress. Rent or furled  
Are all art's ensigns. Verse moans. Now begin  
Famines of thought and feeling. Love's wine's thin.  
The grain of earth's great autumn rots, down-hurled.

For after Spring had bloomed in early Greece,  
And Summer blazed to perfect strength in Rome,  
There fell a slow grand age, a harvest-home,  
Quietly ripening [rich with all increase].\*  
But now the exigent winter, and the need  
Of sowings for new spring, and flesh for seed.

(\* These words are deleted, but none substituted, in the ms.)

Such was his reading of the War as an abstract subject, and in 1915—the date of his enlistment was controlled by his tutorial engagement—he returned to England in order to take his share of its significances to the individual. He joined the Artist's Rifles. His view of the soldier as the victim began to appear in his verses. . . . Gazetted to the Manchester Regiment, Owen joined the 2nd Battalion in January 1917 on the Somme battle-field, where the last sharp fighting was in progress, in that hardest of winters, before the Germans withdrew to their new trench system. Letters home disclose something of his individual experience and of the general life—now so remote in its singularities—of British infantrymen in Flanders. Before leaving the Base Wilfred wrote: "I have just received Orders to take

the train at Étaples to join the 2nd Manchesters. This is a Regular Regiment, so I have come off mighty well. . . . It is a huge satisfaction to be going among well-trained troops and genuine 'real-old' officers. . . . This morning I was hit! We were bombing, and a fragment from some where hit my thumb knuckle. I coaxed out one drop of blood. Alas! no more!! There is a fine heroic feeling about being in France, and I am in perfect spirits. A tinge of excitement is about me, but excitement is always necessary to my happiness."

*Sunday, Jan. 7, 1917.* "It is afternoon. We had an Inspection to make from 9 to 12 this morning. I have wandered into a village café where they gave me writing paper. We made a redoubtable march yesterday from the last Camp to this. The

From *Poems of Wilfred Owen*, by permission of the publishers, Chatto & Windus.

## Coming-of-Age in Our Time

awful state of the roads, and the enormous weight carried, was too much for scores of men. Officers also carried full packs, but I had a horse part of the way. It was beginning to freeze through the rain when we arrived at our tents. We were at the mercy of the cold, and, being in health, I never suffered so terribly as yesterday afternoon. I am really quite well, but have sensations kindred to being seriously ill. As I was making my damp bed, I heard the guns for the first time. It was a sound not without a certain sublimity. They woke me again at 4 o'clock. We are two in a tent. I am with the Lewis Gun Officer. We begged stretchers from the doctor to sleep on. . . . This would not be so bad, but for lack of water and the intense damp cold. . . . This morning I have been reading Trench Standing Orders to my platoon (*verb. sap.*). Needless to say I show a cheerier face to them than I wear in writing this letter; but I must not disguise from you the fact that we are at one of the worst parts of the Line. . . . When we arrived at this deserted village last night, there had been no billets prepared for the battalion—owing to misunderstanding. Imagine the confusion! For my part I discovered, or rather my new-chosen and faithful servant discovered, a fine little hut, with a chair in it. A four-legged chair! The roof is waterproof, and there is a stove. There is only one slight disadvantage: there is a howitzer just 70 or 80 yards away, firing over the top every minute or so. I can't tell you how glad I am you got me the ear-defenders. I have to wear them at night. Every time No. 2 (the nearest gun) fires, all my pharmacopoeia, all my boots, candle, and nerves take a smart jump upwards. This phenomenon is immediately followed by a fine rain of particles from

the roof. I keep blowing them off the page. From time to time the village is shelled, but just now nothing is coming over. Anyhow there is a good cellar close to. . . . I spent an hour to-day behind the guns (to get used to them). The major commanding the battery was very pleasant indeed. He took me to his H.Q., and gave me a book of poems to read as if it were the natural thing to do!! But all night I shall be hearing the fellow's voice: 'Number Two—FIRE!'

On January 16 he wrote: "I can see no excuse for deceiving you about these last 4 days. I have suffered seventh hell. I have not been at the front. I have been in front of it. I held an advanced post, that is, a 'dug-out' in the middle of No Man's Land. We had a march of 3 miles over shelled road, then nearly 3 along a flooded trench. After that we came to where the trenches had been blown flat out and had to go over the top. It was of course dark, too dark, and the ground was not mud, not sloppy mud, but an octopus of sucking clay, 3, 4 and 5 feet deep, relieved only by craters full of water. Men have been known to drown in them. Many stuck in the mud and only got out by leaving their waders, equipment, and in some cases their clothes. High explosives were dropping all around, and machine-guns spluttered every few minutes. But it was so dark that even the German flares did not reveal us. Three-quarters dead, I mean each of us  $\frac{3}{4}$  dead, we reached the dug-out and relieved the wretches therein. I then had to go forth and find another dug-out for a still more advanced post where I left 18 bombers. I was responsible for other posts on the left, but there was a junior officer in charge. My dug-out held 25 men tight packed. Water filled it to a depth of 1 or 2

## *Memoir of Wilfred Owen*

feet, leaving say 4 feet of air. One entrance had been blown in and blocked. So far, the other remained. The Germans knew we were staying there and decided we shouldn't. Those fifty hours were the agony of my happy life. Every ten minutes on Sunday afternoon seemed an hour. I nearly broke down and let myself drown in the water that was now slowly rising over my knees. Towards 6 o'clock, when, I suppose, you would be going to church, the shelling grew less intense and less accurate; so that I was mercifully helped to do my duty and crawl, wade, climb and flounder over No Man's Land to visit my other post. It took me half an hour to move over 150 yards. I was chiefly annoyed by our own machine-guns from behind. The seeng-seeng-seeng of the bullets reminded me of Mary's canary. On the whole I can support the canary better. . . . I allow myself to tell you all these things because *I am never going back to this awful post*. It is the worst the Manchesters have ever held; and we are going back for a rest."

The winter of 1916-1917 will long be remembered for its scarcely tolerable cold. The 2nd Manchesters did not get the rest expected, and Owen was soon in the front line again. "In this place my platoon had no dug-outs, but had to lie in the snow under the deadly wind. By day it was impossible to stand up, or even crawl about, because we were behind only a little ridge screening us from the Boche's periscope. We had 5 Tommy's Cookers between the platoon, but they did not suffice to melt the ice in the water-cans. So we suffered cruelly from thirst. The marvel is that we did not all die of cold. As a matter of fact, only one of my party actually froze to death before he could be got back, but I am not able to tell how many have ended

in hospital. I have no real casualties from shelling, though for 10 minutes every hour whizzbangs fell a few yards short of us. Showers of soil rained on us but no fragment of shell could find us. . . . My feet ached until they could ache no more, and so they temporarily died. I was kept warm by the ardor of Life within me. I forgot hunger in the hunger for Life. . . . I cannot say I felt any fear. We were all half-crazed by the buffeting of the high explosives. I think the most unpleasant reflection that weighed on me was the impossibility of getting back any wounded, a total impossibility by day, and frightfully difficult by night. We were marooned on a frozen desert. There is not a sign of life on the horizon, and a thousand signs of death. Not a blade of grass, not an insect; once or twice a day the shadow of a big hawk, scenting carrion. . . ."

On March 1 he rejoined his battalion in the extreme south of the British trench line, recently taken over from the French. It was quiet—"so quiet that we have our meals in a shallow dug-out, and only go down deep to sleep." He was soon kept busy in charge of digging parties. On March 14 he reported an accident of a kind which might easily have been more frequent in the devastated area: "Last night I was going around through pitch darkness to see a man in a dangerous state of exhaustion. I fell into a kind of well, only about 15 ft., but I caught the back of my head on the way down. The doctors (not in consultation!) say I have a slight concussion. Of course I have a vile headache, but I don't feel at all fuddled." Five days later he wrote again of this mishap. "I am in a hospital bed (for the first time in life). After falling into that hole (which I believe was a shell-hole in a floor, laying open a deep cellar) I felt



### *Coming-of-Age in Our Time*

nothing more than a headache, for 3 days; and went up to the front in the usual way—or nearly the usual way, for I felt too weak to wrestle with the mud, and sneaked along the top, snapping my fingers at a clumsy sniper. When I got back I developed a high fever, vomited strenuously and long, and was seized with muscular pains. The night before last I was sent to a shanty a bit farther back, and yesterday motored on to this Field Hospital, called Casualty Clearing Station 13." He added that he felt better, and, on March 21, that he was getting up and expecting soon "to overtake my Battalion" again. . . . The battalion had been attacking, and he "caravanned" to them over unfamiliar territory. . . . He found his battalion, and was very welcome, for they had not made their successful attack without heavy losses. Then—"We stuck to our line four days (and four nights) without relief, in the open, and in the snow. Not an hour passed without a shell amongst us. I never went off to sleep on those days, because the others were far more fagged after several days of fighting than I fresh from bed. We lay in wet snow. I kept alive on brandy, the fear of death, and the glorious prospect of the cathedral town just below us." . . .

Almost three weeks passed before his next letter (April 25). He had been in attack in the period. "Never before has the Battalion encountered such intense shelling as rained upon us as we advanced in the open. . . . The reward we got for all this was to remain in the Line 12 days. For twelve days I did not wash my face, nor take off my boots, nor sleep a deep sleep. For twelve days we lay in holes, where at any moment a shell might put us out. I think the worst incident was one wet

night when we lay up against a railway embankment. A big shell lit on the top of the bank, just 2 yards from my head. Before I awoke, I was blown in the air right away from the bank! I passed most of the following days in a railway cutting, in a hole just big enough to lie in, and covered with corrugated iron." . . .

"I think that the terribly long time we stayed unrelieved was unavoidable; yet it makes us feel bitterly toward those in England who might relieve us, and will not. We are now doing what is called a Rest, but we rise at 6.15 and work without break until about 10 P.M., for there is always a Pow-Wow for officers after dinner. And if I have not written yesterday, it is because I must have kept hundreds of letters uncensored, and inquiries about missing men unanswered."

On May 2 he wrote from the 13th Casualty Clearing Station: "Here again! The Doctor suddenly was moved to forbid me to go into action next time the Battalion go, which will be in a day or two. I did not go sick or anything, but he is nervous about my nerves, and sent me down yesterday—labeled Neurasthenia. I still of course suffer from the headaches traceable to my concussion. . . . Do not for a moment suppose I have had a 'break-down'! I am simply avoiding one."

(May 14). "The sensations of going over the top are about as exhilarating as those dreams of falling over a precipice, when you see the rocks at the bottom surging up to you. I woke up without being squashed. Some didn't. There was an extraordinary exultation in the act of slowly walking forward, showing ourselves openly. There was no bugle and no drum, for which I was very sorry. I kept up a kind of chanting sing-song:

## Memoir of Wilfred Owen

Keep the Line straight!  
Not so fast on the left!  
Steady on the left!  
Not so fast!

Then we were caught in a tornado of shells. The various 'waves' were all broken up, and we carried on like a crowd moving off a cricket-field. When I looked back and saw the ground all crawling and wormy with wounded bodies, I felt no horror at all, but only an immense exultation at having got through the barrage."

About June 10, after confused arrangements, Owen was at No. 1 General Hospital. . . . "At present," he wrote on August 8, clearly feeling the War's influence even more deeply than before, "I am a sick man in hospital, by night; a poet, for quarter of an hour after breakfast; I am whatever and whoever I see while going down to Edinburgh on the train: green-grocer, policeman, shopping lady, errand-boy, paper-boy, blind man, crippled Tommy, bank-clerk, carter, all of these in half an hour. . . ."

At Craiglockhart he was enterprising; he performed at concerts, he lectured, and he edited the hospital magazine called *The Hydra*. About the beginning of August, Captain Siegfried Sassoon arrived. Owen had been reading his *Old Huntsman*. "Nothing like his trench-life sketches has ever been written or ever will be written." One day he ventured to call at his hero's room and to show him some poems, which received some praise and some blame. On the evening of September 7, again, "Sassoon called me in to him; and having condemned some of my poems, amended others, and rejoiced over a few, he read me his very last works, which are superb beyond anything in his book. . . . I don't tell him so, or that I am not worthy to

light his pipe. I simply sit tight and tell him where I think he goes wrong."

Following an ancient custom of mankind, he reviewed the past on the last day of 1917, writing thus to his mother: "And so I have come to the true measure of man. I am not dissatisfied [with] my years. Everything has been done in bouts: Bouts of awful labor at Shrewsbury and Bordeaux; bouts of amazing pleasure in the Pyrenees, and play at Craiglockhart; bouts of religion at Dunsden; bouts of horrible danger on the Somme; bouts of poetry always; of your affection always; of sympathy for the oppressed always. I go out of this year a poet, my dear mother, as which I did not enter it. I am held peer by the Georgians; I am a poet's poet. I am started. The tugs have left me; I feel the great swelling of the open sea taking my galleon. Last year, at this time (it is just midnight, and now is the intolerable instant of the Change), last year I lay awake in a windy tent in the middle of a vast, dreadful encampment. It seemed neither France nor England, but a kind of paddock where the beasts are kept a few days before the shambles. I heard the revelling of the Scotch troops, who are now dead, and who knew they would be dead. I thought of this present night, and whether I should indeed—whether we should indeed—whether you would indeed—but I thought neither long nor deeply, for I am a master of elision. But chiefly I thought of the very strange look on all faces in that camp; an incomprehensible look, which a man will never see in England, though wars should be in England; nor can it be seen in any battle. But only in Étaples. It was not despair, or terror, it was more terrible than terror, for it was a blindfold look, and without expression, like a dead rabbit's. It will never be painted,

## *Coming-of-Age in Our Time*

and no actor will ever seize it. And to describe it, I think I must go back and be with them. We are sending seven officers straight out tomorrow. I have not said what I am thinking this night, but next December I will surely do so."

At the close of July he was preparing to go overseas. "Now must I throw my little candle on [Sassoon's] torch and go out again. There are rumors of a large draft of officers shortly." A few days later he reported that he was to attend for medical inspection, and would proceed to France. "I am glad. That is I am much gladder to be going out again than afraid. I shall be better able to cry my outcry, playing my part. The secondary annoyances and discomforts of France behind the line can be no worse than this Battalion." . . .

Owen was quickly with his old battalion, and he obtained the command of D Company. His new experiences, as he had anticipated, were terrible, but he maintained the serenity of which he spoke, and he continued to write poems on the war. He wrote to Mr. Sassoon on September 22: "You said it would be a good thing for my poetry if I went back. That is my consolation for feeling a fool. This is what shells scream at me every time: 'Haven't you got the wits to keep out of this?'" And on October 10: "Your letter reached me at the exact moment it was most needed—when we had come far enough out of the line to feel the misery of billets; and I had been seized with writer's cramp after making out my casualty reports. (I'm O.C. D. Coy.) The Battalion had a sheer time last week. I can find no better epithet; because I cannot say I suffered anything, having let my brain grow dull. That is to say, my nerves are in perfect order." . . .

A fellow-officer, Lieut. J. Foulkes, M.C., has obligingly written down his reminis-

cences of the Owen who belonged to the trenches and billets of Flanders. "We traveled together. . . . The first real attack in which we took part was the one which followed the capture of the Hindenburg Line. We had to take what I think was then looked upon as a 2nd Hindenburg Line and which I remember was well wired. The attack was successful but costly—Owen and I were the only officers left in our Company and he became pro tem. Company Commander. It was for his work here that he received the M.C. Left with few men and lacking any means of cover save a German pill-box, which was really a death-trap because it was on this that the enemy concentrated his fire, Owen succeeded in holding the line until relieved by the Lancs. Fusiliers some time afterwards. This is where I admired his work—in leading his remnants, in the middle of the night, back to safety. I remember feeling how glad I was that it was not my job to know how to get out. I was content to follow him with the utmost confidence in his leadership."

October 31 . . . Writing to his mother, Owen repeated the words, "My nerves are in perfect order . . . I came out," he added, "in order to help these boys—directly by leading them as well as an officer can, indirectly by watching their sufferings that I may speak of them as well as a pleader can. I have done the first." He had, and he was to continue to the end, which came one week before the Armistice fell from heaven on those colorless and water-logged battle-fields. On November 4, 1918, in face of those resolute German machine-gunners who would not have yielded yet if they could have helped it, Wilfred Owen was endeavoring to pass his company over the Sambre Canal. "Zero," writes Mr. Foulkes, "was, I think, 6 A.M., and once more our Company was

## *Apologia Pro Poemate Meo*

to lead. From the 'kicking-off' trench or road we reached the spot on the Canal which should have been temporarily bridged by the Engineers, but the plan had unfortunately failed owing to the heavy fire concentrated by machine-guns and artillery at that particular spot. Instead of gaining the other side, we had therefore to take cover behind the Canal bank, which rose to a height of about four feet. Attempts were made to cross on rafts, but these were unsuccessful." Owen is re-

membered patting his men on the back as he moved about, with a "Well done!" and "You are doing very well, my boy." The Engineers who were trying to bridge the Canal almost all became casualties. Owen took a hand with some duckboards or planks, and was at the water's edge helping his men to fix them when he was hit and killed. "The battalion eventually crossed lower down by means of a bridge near the village of Ors, a few miles south of Landrécies."

### Preface to A PROJECTED VOLUME OF POEMS

*by* WILFRED OWEN

THIS book is not about heroes. English Poetry is not yet fit to speak of them.

Nor is it about deeds, or lands, nor anything about glory, honor, might, majesty, dominion, or power, except War.

Above all I am not concerned with Poetry.

My subject is War, and the pity of War.

The Poetry is in the pity.

Yet these elegies are to this generation in no sense consolatory. They may be to the next. All a poet can do to-day is warn. That is why the true Poets must be truthful.

(If I thought the letter of this book would last, I might have used proper names; but if the spirit of it survives—survives Prussia—my ambition and those names will have achieved themselves fresher fields than Flanders. . . .)

### APOLOGIA PRO POEMATE MEO

*by* WILFRED OWEN

I, too, saw God through mud—

The mud that cracked on cheeks when wretches smiled.

War brought more glory to their eyes than blood,

And gave their laughs more glee than shakes a child.

Merry it was to laugh there—

Where death becomes absurd and life absurder.

For power was on us as we slashed bones bare

Not to feel sickness or remorse of murder.

The poems on pages 477-481 from *Poems of Wilfred Owen*, by permission of the publishers, Chatto & Windus.

## *Coming-of-Age in Our Time*

I, too, have dropped off fear—

Behind the barrage, dead as my platoon,  
And sailed my spirit surging, light and clear  
Past the entanglement where hopes lay strewn;

And witnessed exaltation—

Faces that used to curse me, scowl for scowl,  
Shine and lift up with passion of oblation,  
Seraphic for an hour; though they were foul.

I have made fellowships—

Untold of happy lovers in old song.  
For love is not the binding of fair lips  
With the soft silk of eyes that look and long,

By Joy, whose ribbon slips,—

But wound with war's hard wire whose stakes are strong;  
Bound with the bandage of the arm that drips;  
Knit in the webbing of the rifle-thong.

I have perceived much beauty

In the hoarse oaths that kept our courage straight;  
Heard music in the silentness of duty;  
Found peace where shell-storms spouted reddest spate.

Nevertheless, except you share

With them in hell the sorrowful dark of hell,  
Whose world is but the trembling of a flare,  
And heaven but as the highway for a shell,

You shall not hear their mirth:

You shall not come to think them well content  
By any jest of mine. These men are worth  
Your tears. You are not worth their merriment.

## ANTHEM FOR DOOMED YOUTH

*by* WILFRED OWEN

What passing-bells for these who die as cattle?

Only the monstrous anger of the guns.

Only the stuttering rifles' rapid rattle

Can patter out their hasty orisons.

No mockeries for them from prayers or bells,

Nor any voice of mourning save the choirs,—

### *Strange Meeting*

The shrill, demented choirs of wailing shells;  
And bugles calling for them from sad shires.

What candles may be held to speed them all?

Not in the hands of boys, but in their eyes  
Shall shine the holy glimmers of good-bys.

The pallor of girls' brows shall be their pall;  
Their flowers the tenderness of silent minds,  
And each slow dusk a drawing-down of blinds.

### GREATER LOVE

*by* WILFRED OWEN

Red lips are not so red

As the stained stones kissed by the  
English dead.

Kindness of wooed and wooer

Seems shame to their love pure.

O Love, your eyes lose lure

When I behold eyes blinded in my  
stead!

Your slender attitude

Trembles not exquisite like limbs  
knife-skewed,

Rolling and rolling there

Where God seems not to care;

Till the fierce Love they bear

Cramps them in death's extreme de-  
crepitude.

Your voice sings not so soft,—

Though even as wind murmuring  
through rafters loft,—

Your dear voice is not dear,

Gentle, and evening clear,

As theirs whom none now hear

Now earth has stopped their piteous  
mouths that coughed.

Heart, you were never hot,

Nor large, nor full like hearts made  
great with shot;

And though your hand be pale,

Paler are all which trail

Your cross through flame and hail:

Weep, you may weep, for you may  
touch them not.

### STRANGE MEETING

*by* WILFRED OWEN

It seemed that out of the battle I escaped  
Down some profound dull tunnel, long since scooped  
Through granites which Titanic wars had groined.  
Yet also there encumbered sleepers groaned,  
Too fast in thought or death to be bestirred.  
Then, as I probed them, one sprang up, and stared  
With piteous recognition in fixed eyes,  
Lifting distressful hands as if to bless.

### *Coming-of-Age in Our Time*

And by his smile, I knew that sullen hall.  
By his dead smile I knew we stood in Hell  
With a thousand pains that vision's face was grained;  
Yet no blood reached there from the upper ground,  
And no guns thumped, or down the flues made moan.  
"Strange friend," I said, "here is no cause to mourn."  
"None," said the other, "save the undone years,  
The hopelessness. Whatever hope is yours,  
Was my life also; I went hunting wild  
After the wildest beauty in the world,  
Which lies not calm in eyes, or braided hair,  
But mocks the steady running of the hour,  
And if it grieves, grieves richlier than here.  
For by my glee might many men have laughed,  
And of my weeping something has been left,  
Which must die now. I mean the truth untold,  
The pity of war, the pity war distilled.  
Now men will go content with what we spoiled,  
Or, discontent, boil bloody, and be spilled.  
They will be swift with swiftness of the tigress,  
None will break ranks, though nations trek from progress.  
Courage was mine, and I had mystery,  
Wisdom was mine, and I had mastery;  
To miss the march of this retreating world  
Into vain citadels that are not walled.  
Then when much blood had clogged their chariot-wheels  
I would go up and wash them from sweet wells,  
Even with truths that lie too deep for taint.  
I would have poured my spirit without stint  
But not through wounds; not on the cess of war.  
Foreheads of men have bled where no wounds were.  
I am the enemy you killed, my friend.  
I knew you in this dark; for so you frowned  
Yesterday through me as you jabbed and killed.  
I parried; but my hands were loath and cold.  
Let us sleep now. . . ."

### DULCE ET DECORUM EST

*by* WILFRED OWEN

Bent double, like old beggars under sacks,  
Knock-kneed, coughing like hags, we cursed through sludge,

## *Futility*

Till on the haunting flares we turned our backs,  
And towards our distant rest began to trudge.  
Men marched asleep. Many had lost their boots,  
But limped on, blood-shod. All went lame, all blind;  
Drunk with fatigue; deaf even to the hoots  
Of gas-shells dropping softly behind.

Gas! Gas! Quick, boys!—An ecstasy of fumbling,  
Fitting the clumsy helmets just in time,  
But some one still was yelling out and stumbling  
And floundering like a man in fire or lime.—  
Dim through the misty panes and thick green light,  
As under a green sea, I saw him drowning.

In all my dreams before my helpless sight  
He plunges at me, guttering, choking, drowning.

If in some smothering dreams, you too could pace  
Behind the wagon that we flung him in,  
And watch the white eyes writhing in his face,  
His hanging face, like a devil's sick of sin,  
If you could hear, at every jolt, the blood  
Come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs  
Bitten as the cud  
Of vile, incurable sores on innocent tongues,—  
My friend, you would not tell with such high zest  
To children ardent for some desperate glory,  
The old Lie: Dulce et decorum est  
Pro patria mori.

## FUTILITY

*by* WILFRED OWEN

Move him into the sun—  
Gently its touch awoke him once,  
At home, whispering of fields unsown.  
Always it woke him, even in France.  
Until this morning and this snow.  
If anything might rouse him now  
The kind old sun will know.

Think how it wakes the seeds—  
Woke, once, the clays of a cold star.  
Are limbs so dear-achieved, are sides  
Full-nerved,—still warm,—too hard to stir?  
Was it for this the clay grew tall?  
—Oh, what made fatuous sunbeams toil  
To break earth's sleep at all?



# ULTIMA RATIO REGUM

by STEPHEN SPENDER

The guns spell money's ultimate reason  
In letters of lead on the spring hillside.  
But the boy lying dead under the olive  
trees

Was too young and too silly  
To have been notable to their important  
eye.

He was a better target for a kiss.

When he lived, tall factory hooters never  
summoned him.

Nor did restaurant plate-glass doors re-  
volve to wave him in.

His name never appeared in the papers.  
The world maintained its traditional wall  
Round the dead with their gold sunk deep  
as a well,

Whilst his life, intangible as a Stock Ex-  
change rumour, drifted outside.

O too lightly he threw down his cap  
One day when the breeze threw petals  
from the trees.

The unflowering wall sprouted with guns,  
Machine-gun anger quickly scythed the  
grasses;

Flags and leaves fell from hands and  
branches;

The tweed cap rotted in the nettles.

Consider his life which was valueless  
In terms of employment, hotel ledgers,  
news files.

Consider. One bullet in ten thousand kills  
a man.

Ask. Was so much expenditure justified  
On the death of one so young and so silly  
Lying under the olive trees, O world, O  
death?

From Stephen Spender, *The Still Centre*. Copyright, 1942, by Stephen Spender. Reprinted by  
permission of Random House, Inc.

## ELEGY FOR A DEAD SOLDIER

by KARL J. SHAPIRO

I

A white sheet on the tail-gate of a truck  
Becomes an altar; two small candlesticks  
Sputter at each side of the crucifix  
Laid round with flowers brighter than the  
blood,

Red as the red of our apocalypse,  
Hibiscus that a marching man will pluck  
To stick into his rifle or his hat,  
And great blue morning-glories pale as lips  
That shall no longer taste or kiss or swear.  
The wind begins a low magnificat,  
The chaplain chats, the palmtrees swirl  
their hair,  
The columns come together through the  
mud.

II

We too are ashes as we watch and hear  
The psalm, the sorrow, and the simple  
praise

Of one whose promised thoughts of other  
days

Were such as ours, but now wholly de-  
stroyed,

The service record of his youth wiped out,  
His dream dispersed by shot, must dis-  
appear.

What can we feel but wonder at a loss  
That seems to point at nothing but the  
doubt

Which flirts our sense of luck into the  
ditch?

From Karl Shapiro, *V-Letter and Other Poems*, Reynal and Hitchcock, Inc.

## *Elegy for a Dead Soldier*

Reader of Paul who prays beside this fosse,  
Shall we believe our eyes or legends rich  
With glory and rebirth beyond the void?

### III

For this comrade is dead, dead in the war,  
A young man out of millions yet to live,  
One cut away from all that war can give,  
Freedom of self and peace to wander free.  
Who mourns in all this sober multitude  
Who did not feel the bite of it before  
The bullet found its aim? This worthy  
flesh,  
This boy laid in a coffin and reviewed—  
Who has not wrapped himself in this same  
flag,  
Heard the light fall of dirt, his wound still  
fresh,  
Felt his eyes closed, and heard the distant  
brag  
Of the last volley of humanity?

### IV

By chance I saw him die, stretched on the  
ground,  
A tattooed arm lifted to take the blood  
Of someone else sealed in a tin. I stood  
During the last delirium that stays  
The intelligence a tiny moment more,  
And then the strangulation, the last sound.  
The end was sudden, like a foolish play,  
A stupid fool slamming a foolish door,  
The absurd catastrophe, half-prearranged,  
And all the decisive things still left to say.  
So we disbanded, angrier and unchanged,  
Sick with the utter silence of dispraise.

### V

We ask for no statistics of the killed,  
For nothing political impinges on  
This single casualty, or all those gone,  
Missing or healing, sinking or dispersed,  
Hundreds of thousands counted, millions  
lost.

More than an accident and less than willed  
Is every fall, and this one like the rest.  
However others calculate the cost,  
To us the final aggregate is *one*,  
One with a name, one transferred to the  
blest;  
And though another stoops and takes the  
gun,  
We cannot add the second to the first.

### VI

I would not speak for him who could not  
speak  
Unless my fear were true: he was not  
wronged,  
He knew to which decision he belonged  
But let it choose itself. Ripe in instinct,  
Neither the victim nor the volunteer,  
He followed, and the leaders could not  
seek  
Beyond the followers. Much of this he  
knew;  
The journey was a detour that would steer  
Into the Lincoln Highway of a land  
Remorselessly improved, excited, new,  
And that was what he wanted. He had  
planned  
To earn and drive. He and the world had  
winked.

### VII

No history deceived him, for he knew  
Little of times and armies not his own;  
He never felt that peace was but a loan,  
Had never questioned the idea of gain.  
Beyond the headlines once or twice he saw  
The gathering of a power by the few  
But could not tell their names; he cast his  
vote,  
Distrusting all the elected but not law.  
He laughed at socialism; *on mourrait* -  
*Pour les industriels*? He shed his coat  
And not for brotherhood, but for his pay.  
To him the red flag marked the sewer  
main.

## *Coming-of-Age in Our Time*

### VIII

Above all else he loathed the homily,  
The slogan and the ad. He paid his bill  
But not for congressmen at Bunker Hill.  
Ideals were few and those there were not  
made

For conversation. He belonged to church  
But never spoke of God. The Christmas  
tree,

The Easter egg, baptism, he observed,  
Never denied the preacher on his perch,  
And would not sign Resolved That or  
Whereas.

Softness he had and hours and nights re-  
served

For thinking, dressing, dancing to the  
jazz.

His laugh was real, his manners were  
home-made.

### IX

Of all men poverty pursued him least;  
He was ashamed of all the down and out,  
Spurned the panhandler like an uneasy  
doubt,

And saw the unemployed as a vague mass  
Incapable of hunger or revolt.

He hated other races, south or east,  
And shoved them to the margin of his  
mind.

He could recall the justice of the Colt,  
Take interest in a gang-war like a game.  
His ancestry was somewhere far behind  
And left him only his peculiar name.  
Doors opened, and he recognized no class.

### X

His children would have known a heri-  
tage,

Just or unjust, the richest in the world,  
The quantum of all art and science curled

In the horn of plenty, bursting from the  
horn,

A people bathed in honey, Paris come,  
Vienna transferred with the highest wage,  
A World's Fair spread to Phoenix, Jack-  
sonville,

Earth's capitol, the new Byzantium,  
Kingdom of man—who knows? Hollow  
or firm,

No man can ever prophesy until  
Out of our death some undiscovered germ,  
Whole toleration or pure peace is born.

### XI

The time to mourn is short that best be-  
comes

The military dead. We lift and fold the  
flag,

Lay bare the coffin with its written tag,  
And march away. Behind, four others wait  
To lift the box, the heaviest of loads.

The anesthetic afternoon benumbs,  
Sickens our senses, forces back our talk.  
We know that others on tomorrow's roads  
Will fall, ourselves perhaps, the man be-  
side,

Over the world the threatened, all who  
walk;

And could we mark the grave of him who  
died

We would write this beneath his name  
and date—

### EPITAPH

Underneath this wooden cross there lies  
A Christian killed in battle. You who read,  
Remember that this stranger died in pain;  
And passing here, if you can lift your eyes  
Upon a peace kept by the human creed,  
Know that one soldier has not died in  
vain.

## SOLDIER FROM THE WARS RETURNING

by A. E. HOUSMAN

Soldier from the wars returning,  
  Spoiler of the taken town,  
Here is 'ease that asks not earning;  
  Turn you in and sit you down.

Now no more of winters biting,  
  Filth in trench from fall to spring,  
Summers full of sweat and fighting  
  For the Kesar or the King.

Peace is come and wars are over,  
  Welcome you and welcome all,  
While the charger crops the clover  
  And his bridle hangs in stall.

Rest you, charger, rust you, bridle;  
  Kings and kesars, keep your pay;  
Soldier, sit you down and idle  
  At the inn of night for aye.

## THE HALF-MOON WESTERS LOW, MY LOVE

by A. E. HOUSMAN

The half-moon westers low, my love,  
  And the wind brings up the rain;  
And wide apart lie we, my love,  
  And seas between the twain.

I know not if it rains, my love,  
  In the land where you do lie;  
And oh, so sound you sleep, my love,  
  You know no more than I.

These poems from A. E. Housman, *Last Poems*, Henry Holt and Company, Inc.

## MEMORIAL RAIN

by ARCHIBALD MACLEISH

Ambassador Puser the ambassador  
Reminds himself in French, felicitous tongue,  
What these (young men no longer) lie here for  
In rows that once, and somewhere else, were young—

All night in Brussels the wind had tugged at my door:  
I had heard the wind at my door and the trees strung  
Taut, and to me who had never been before  
In that country it was a strange wind blowing  
Steadily, stiffening the walls, the floor,  
The roof of my room. I had not slept for knowing  
He too, dead, was a stranger in that land

The selection from Archibald MacLeish *Poems 1924-1933* is used by permission of the publishers, Houghton Mifflin Company.

### *Coming-of-Age in Our Time*

And felt beneath the earth in the wind's flowing  
A tightening of roots and would not understand,  
Remembering lake winds in Illinois,  
That strange wind. I had felt his bones in the sand.  
Listening.

—Reflects that these enjoy  
Their country's gratitude, that deep repose,  
That peace no pain can break, no hurt destroy,  
That rest, that sleep—

At Ghent the wind rose.  
There was a smell of rain and a heavy drag  
Of wind in the hedges but not as the wind blows  
Over fresh water when the waves lag  
Foaming and the willows huddle and it will rain:  
I felt him waiting.

—Indicates the flag  
Which (may he say) enisles in Flanders' plain  
This little field these happy, happy dead  
Have made America—

In the ripe grain  
The wind coiled glistening, darted, fled,  
Dragging its heavy body: at Waereghem  
The wind coiled in the grass above his head:  
Waiting—listening—

—Dedicates to them  
This earth their bones have hallowed, this last gift  
A grateful country—

Under the dry grass stem  
The words are blurred, are thickened, the words sift  
Confused by the rasp of the wind, by the thin grating  
Of ants under the grass, the minute shift  
And tumble of dusty sand separating  
From dusty sand. The roots of the grass strain,  
Tighten, the earth is rigid, waits—he is waiting—

And suddenly, and all at once, the rain!

## War

The living scatter, they run into houses, the wind  
Is trampled under the rain, shakes free, is again  
Trampled. The rain gathers, running in thinned  
Spurts of water that ravel in the dry sand  
Seeping in the sand under the grass roots, seeping  
Between cracked boards to the bones of a clenched hand:  
The earth relaxes, loosens; he is sleeping,  
He rests, he is quiet, he sleeps in a strange land.

## WAR

by LUIGI PIRANDELLO

THE PASSENGERS who had left Rome by the night express had had to stop until dawn at the small station of Fabriano in order to continue their journey by the small old-fashioned local joining the main line with Sulmona.

At dawn, in a stuffy and smoky second-class carriage in which five people had already spent the night, a bulky woman in deep mourning was hoisted in—almost like a shapeless bundle. Behind her—puffing and moaning, followed her husband—a tiny man, thin and weakly, his face death-white, his eyes small and bright and looking shy and uneasy.

Having at last taken a seat he politely thanked the passengers who had helped his wife and who had made room for her; then he turned round to the woman trying to pull down the collar of her coat, and politely inquired:

"Are you all right, dear?"

The wife, instead of answering, pulled up her collar again to her eyes, so as to hide her face.

"Nasty world," muttered the husband with a sad smile.

And he felt it his duty to explain to his traveling companions that the poor woman was to be pitied for the war was taking away from her her only son, a boy of twenty to whom both had devoted their entire life, even breaking up their home at Sulmona to follow him to Rome, where he had to go as a student, then allowing him to volunteer for war with an assurance, however, that at least for six months he would not be sent to the front and now, all of a sudden, receiving a wire saying that he was due to leave in three days' time and asking them to go and see him off.

The woman under the big coat was twisting and wriggling, at times growling like a wild animal, feeling certain that all those explanations would not have aroused even a shadow of sympathy from those people who—most likely—were in the same plight as herself. One of them, who had been listening with particular attention, said:

"You should thank God that your son is only leaving now for the front. Mine has been sent there the first day of the

Taken from *The Medals and Other Stories*, by Luigi Pirandello, published and copyright by E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., New York.

## *Coming-of-Age in Our Time*

war. He has already come back twice wounded and been sent back again to the front."

"What about me? I have two sons and three nephews at the front," said another passenger.

"Maybe, but in our case it is our *only* son," ventured the husband.

"What difference can it make? You may spoil your only son with excessive attentions, but you cannot love him more than you would all your other children if you had any. Paternal love is not like bread that can be broken into pieces and split amongst the children in equal shares. A father gives *all* his love to each one of his children without discrimination, whether it be one or ten, and if I am suffering now for my two sons, I am not suffering half for each of them but double . . ."

"True . . . true . . ." sighed the embarrassed husband, "but suppose (of course we all hope it will never be your case) a father has two sons at the front and he loses one of them, there is still one left to console him . . . while . . ."

"Yes," answered the other, getting cross, "a son left to console him but also a son left for whom he must survive, while in the case of the father of an only son if the son dies the father can die too and put an end to his distress. Which of the two positions is the worse? Don't you see how my case would be worse than yours?"

"Nonsense," interrupted another traveler, a fat, red-faced man with bloodshot eyes of the palest gray.

He was panting. From his bulging eyes seemed to spurt inner violence of an uncontrolled vitality which his weakened body could hardly contain.

"Nonsense," he repeated, trying to cover his mouth with his hand so as to hide the

two missing front teeth. "Nonsense. Do we give life to our children for our own benefit?"

The other travelers stared at him in distress. The one who had had his son at the front since the first day of the war sighed: "You are right. Our children do not belong to us, they belong to the Country. . . ."

"Bosh," retorted the fat traveler. "Do we think of the Country when we give life to our children? Our sons are born because . . . well, because they must be born and when they come to life they take our own life with them. This is the truth. We belong to them but they never belong to us. And when they reach twenty they are exactly what we were at their age. We too had a father and mother, but there were so many other things as well . . . girls, cigarettes, illusions, new ties . . . and the Country, of course, whose call we would have answered—when we were twenty—even if father and mother had said no. Now at our age, the love of our Country is still great, of course, but stronger than it is the love for our children. Is there any one of us here who wouldn't gladly take his son's place at the front if he could?"

There was a silence all round, everybody nodding as to approve.

"Why then," continued the fat man, "shouldn't we consider the feelings of our children when they are twenty? Isn't it natural that at their age they should consider the love for their Country (I am speaking of decent boys, of course) even greater than the love for us? Isn't it natural that it should be so, as after all they must look upon us as upon old boys who cannot move any more and must stay at home? If Country exists, if Country is a

natural necessity, like bread, of which each of us must eat in order not to die of hunger, somebody must go to defend it. And our sons go, when they are twenty, and they don't want tears, because if they die, they die inflamed and happy (I am speaking, of course, of decent boys). Now, if one dies young and happy, without having the ugly sides of life, the boredom of it, the pettiness, the bitterness of disillusion . . . what more can we ask for him? Everyone should stop crying; everyone should laugh, as I do . . . or at least thank God—as I do—because my son, before dying, sent me a message saying that he was dying satisfied at having ended his life in the best way he could have wished. That is why, as you see, I do not even wear mourning. . . .”

He shook his light fawn coat as to show it; his livid lip over his missing teeth was trembling, his eyes were watery and motionless, and soon after he ended with a shrill laugh which might well have been a sob.

“Quite so . . . quite so . . .” agreed the others.

The woman who, bundled in a corner under her coat, had been sitting and listening had—for the last three months—tried to find in the words of her husband and her friends something to console her in her deep sorrow, something that might show her how a mother should resign herself to send her son not even to death but to a probably dangerous life. Yet not a word had she found amongst the many which had been said . . . and her grief had been greater in seeing that nobody—as she thought—could share her feelings.

But now the words of the traveler

amazed and almost stunned her. She suddenly realized that it wasn't the others who were wrong and could not understand her but herself who could not rise up to the same height of those fathers and mothers willing to resign themselves, without crying, not only to the departure of their sons but even to their death.

She lifted her head, she bent over from her corner trying to listen with great attention to the details which the fat man was giving to his companions about the way his son had fallen as a hero, for his King and his Country, happy and without regrets. It seemed to her that she had stumbled into a world she had never dreamt of, a world so far unknown to her and she was so pleased to hear everyone joining in congratulating that brave father who could so stoically speak of his child's death.

Then suddenly, just as if she had heard nothing of what had been said and almost as if waking up from a dream, she turned to the old man, asking him:

“Then . . . is your son really dead?”

Everybody stared at her. The old man, too, turned to look at her, fixing his great, bulging, horribly watery light gray eyes, deep in her face. For some little time he tried to answer, but words failed him. He looked and looked at her, almost as if only then—at that silly, incongruous question—he had suddenly realized at last that his son was really dead—gone for ever—for ever. His face contracted, became horribly distorted, then he snatched in haste a handkerchief from his pocket and, to the amazement of everyone, broke into harrowing, heart-rending, uncontrollable sobs.





Copyright United Feature Syndicate, Inc.

*"Th' hell this ain't th' most important hole in th' world. I'm in it."*

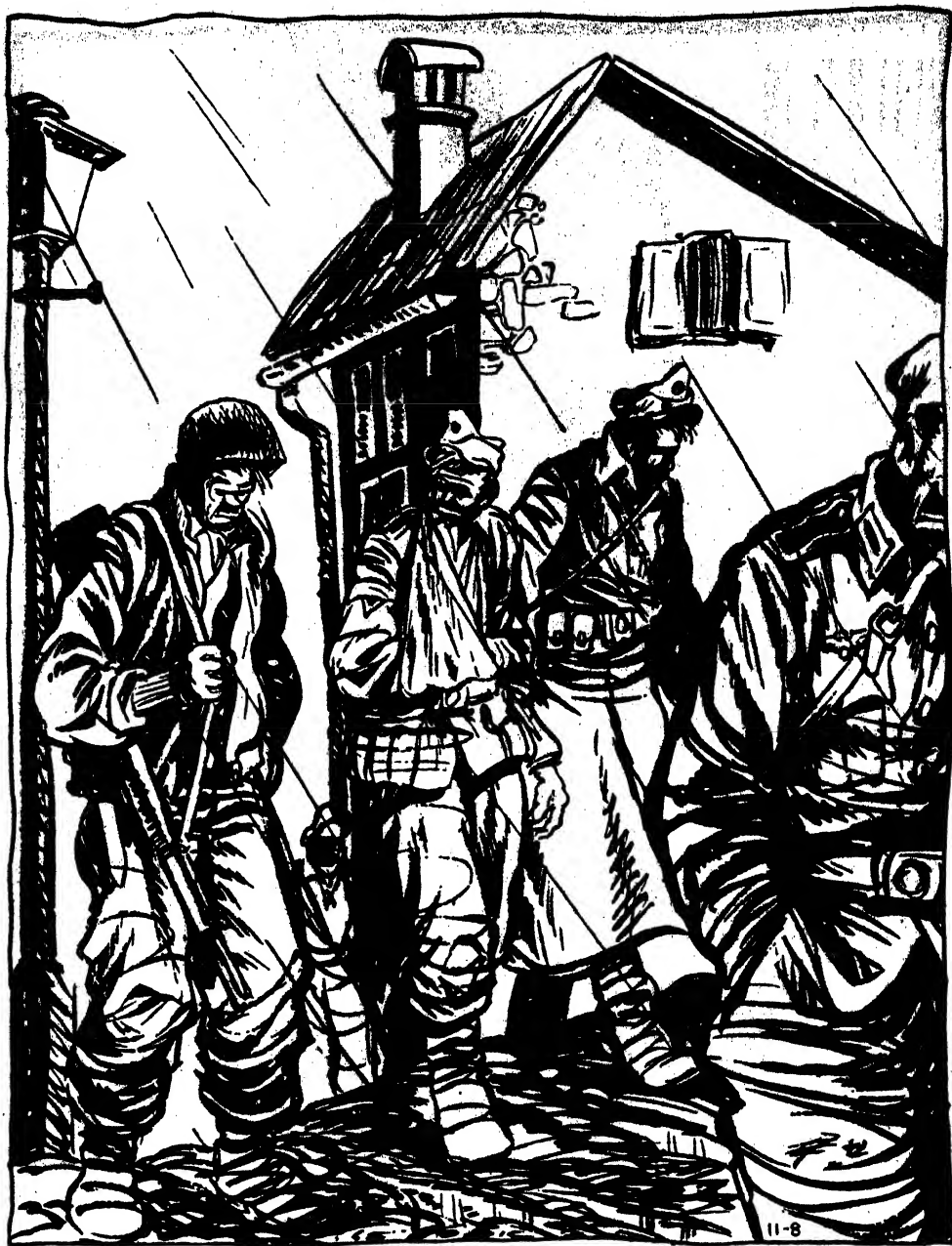
*From Bill Mauldin's Up Front, Henry Holt and Company*



Copyright United Feature Syndicate, Inc.

*"I'm depending on you old men to be a steadying influence for  
the replacements."*

*From Bill Mauldin's Up Front, Henry Holt and Company*



Copyright United Feature Syndicate, Inc.

*"Fresh, spirited American troops, flushed with victory, are bringing in thousands of hungry, ragged, battle weary prisoners."  
(News item)*

*From Bill Mauldin's Up Front, Henry Holt and Company*



Copyright United Feature Syndicate, Inc.

*"I'm beginning to feel like a fugitive from th' law of averages."*

*From Bill Mauldin's Up Front, Henry Holt and Company*

## from ONLY YESTERDAY

by FREDERICK LEWIS ALLEN

*Prelude: May, 1919*

IF TIME were suddenly to turn back to the earliest days of the Post-war Decade, and you were to look about you, what would seem strange to you? Since 1919 the circumstances of American life have been transformed—yes, but exactly how?

Let us refresh our memories by following a moderately well-to-do young couple of Cleveland or Boston or Seattle or Baltimore—it hardly matters which—through the routine of an ordinary day in May, 1919. (I select that particular date, six months after the Armistice of 1918, because by then the United States had largely succeeded in turning from the ways of war to those of peace, yet the profound alterations wrought by the Post-war Decade had hardly begun to take place.) There is no better way of suggesting what the passage of a few years has done to change you and me and the environment in which we live.

From the appearance of Mr. Smith as he comes to the breakfast table on this May morning in 1919, you would hardly know that you are not in the nineteen-thirties (though you might, perhaps, be struck by the narrowness of his trousers). The movement of men's fashions is glacial. It is different, however, with Mrs. Smith.

She comes to breakfast in a suit, the skirt of which—rather tight at the ankles—hangs just six inches from the ground. She has read in *Vogue* the alarming news that skirts may become even shorter, and

that "not since the days of the Bourbons has the woman of fashion been visible so far above the ankle"; but six inches is still the orthodox clearance. She wears low shoes now, for spring has come; but all last winter she protected her ankles either with spats or with high laced "walking-boots," or with high patent-leather shoes with contrasting buckskin tops. Her stockings are black (or tan, perhaps, if she wears tan shoes); the idea of flesh-colored stockings would appall her. A few minutes ago Mrs. Smith was surrounding herself with an "envelope chemise" and a petticoat; and from the thick ruffles on her undergarments it was apparent that she was not disposed to make herself more boyish in form than ample nature intended.

Mrs. Smith may use powder, but she probably draws the line at paint. Although the use of cosmetics is no longer, in 1919, considered *prima facie* evidence of a scarlet career, and sophisticated young girls have already begun to apply them with some bravado, most well-brought-up women still frown upon rouge. The beauty-parlor industry is in its infancy; there are a dozen hair-dressing parlors for every beauty parlor, and Mrs. Smith has never heard of such dark arts as that of face-lifting. When she puts on her hat to go shopping she will add a veil pinned neatly together behind her head. In the shops she will perhaps buy a bathing-suit for use in the summer; it will consist of

From *Only Yesterday*, by Frederick Lewis Allen. Harper & Brothers. Copyright, 1931, by Frederick Lewis Allen.

an outer tunic of silk or cretonne over a tight knitted undergarment—worn, of course, with long stockings.

Her hair is long, and the idea of a woman ever frequenting a barber shop would never occur to her. If you have forgotten what the general public thought of short hair in those days, listen to the remark of the manager of the Palm Garden in New York when reporters asked him, one night in November, 1918, how he happened to rent his hall for a pro-Bolshevist meeting which had led to a riot. Explaining that a well-dressed woman had come in a fine automobile to make arrangements for the use of the auditorium, he added, "Had we noticed then, as we do now, that she had short hair, we would have refused to rent the hall." In Mrs. Smith's mind, as in that of the manager of the Palm Garden, short-haired women, like long-haired men, are associated with radicalism, if not with free love.

The breakfast to which Mr. and Mrs. Smith sit down may have been arranged with a view to the provision of a sufficient number of calories—they need only to go to Childs' to learn about calories—but in all probability neither of them has ever heard of a vitamin.

As Mr. Smith eats, he opens the morning paper. It is almost certainly not a tabloid, no matter how rudimentary Mr. Smith's journalistic tastes may be: for although Mr. Hearst has already experimented with small-sized picture papers, the first conspicuously successful tabloid is yet to be born. Not until June 26, 1919, will the New York *Daily News* reach the newsstands, beginning a career that will bring its daily circulation in one year to nearly a quarter of a million, in five years to over four-fifths of a million, and

in ten years to the amazing total of over one million three hundred thousand.

Strung across the front page of Mr. Smith's paper are headlines telling of the progress of the American Navy seaplane, the NC-4, on its flight across the Atlantic *via* the Azores. That flight is the most sensational news story of May, 1919. (Alcock and Brown have not yet crossed the ocean in a single hop; they will do it a few weeks hence, eight long years ahead of Lindbergh). But there is other news, too: of the Peace Conference at Paris, where the Treaty is now in its later stages of preparation; of the successful oversubscription of the Victory Loan ("Sure, we'll finish the job!" the campaign posters have been shouting); of the arrival of another transport with soldiers from overseas; of the threat of a new strike; of a speech by Mayor Ole Hanson of Seattle denouncing that scourge of the times, the I. W. W.; of the prospects for the passage of the Suffrage Amendment, which it is predicted will enable women to take "a finer place in the national life"; and of Henry Ford's libel suit against the Chicago *Tribune*—in the course of which he will call Benedict Arnold a writer, and in reply to the question, "Have there been any revolutions in this country?" will answer, "Yes, in 1812."

If Mr. Smith attends closely to the sporting news, he may find obscure mention of a young pitcher and outfielder for the Boston Red Sox named Ruth. But he will hardly find the Babe's name in the headlines. (In April, 1919, Ruth made one home run; in May, two; but the season was much further advanced before sporting writers began to notice that he was running up a new record for swatting—twenty-nine home runs for the year; the season had closed before the New York

## *Coming-of-Age in Our Time*

Yankees, seeing gold in the hills, bought him for \$125,000; and the summer of 1920 had arrived before a man died of excitement when he saw Ruth smash a ball into the bleachers, and it became clear that the mob had found a new idol. In 1919, the veteran Ty Cobb, not Ruth, led the American League in batting.)

The sporting pages inform Mr. Smith that Rickard has selected Toledo as the scene of a forthcoming encounter between the heavyweight champion, Jess Willard, and another future idol of the mob, Jack Dempsey. (They met, you may recall, on the Fourth of July, 1919, and sober citizens were horrified to read that 19,650 people were so depraved as to sit in a broiling sun to watch Dempsey knock out the six-foot-six-inch champion in the third round. How would the sober citizens have felt if they had known that eight years later a Dempsey-Tunney fight would bring in more than five times as much money in gate receipts as this battle of Toledo?) In the sporting pages there may be news of Bobby Jones, the seventeen-year-old Southern golf champion, or of William T. Tilden, Jr., who is winning tennis tournaments here and there, but neither of them is yet a national champion. And even if Jones were to win this year he would hardly become a great popular hero; for although golf is gaining every day in popularity, it has not yet become an inevitable part of the weekly ritual of the American business man. Mr. Smith very likely still scoffs at "grown men who spend their time knocking a little white ball along the ground"; it is quite certain that he has never heard of plus fours; and if he should happen to play golf he had better not show his knickerbockers in the city streets, or small boys will shout to him, "Hey, get some men's pants!"

Did I say that by May, 1919, the war was a thing of the past? There are still reminders of it in Mr. Smith's paper. Not only the news from the Peace Conference, not only the item about Sergeant Alvin York being on his way home; there is still that ugliest reminder of all, the daily casualty list.

Mr. and Mrs. Smith discuss a burning subject, the High Cost of Living. Mr. Smith is hoping for an increase in salary, but meanwhile the family income seems to be dwindling as prices rise. Everything is going up—food, rent, clothing, and taxes. These are the days when people remark that even the man without a dollar is fifty cents better off than he once was, and that if we coined seven-cent pieces for street-car fares, in another year we should have to discontinue them and begin to coin fourteen-cent pieces. Mrs. Smith, confronted with an appeal from Mr. Smith for economy, reminds him that milk has jumped since 1914 from nine to fifteen cents a quart, sirloin steak from twenty-seven to forty-two cents a pound, butter from thirty-two to sixty-one cents a pound, and fresh eggs from thirty-four to sixty-two cents a dozen. No wonder people on fixed salaries are suffering, and colleges are beginning to talk of applying the money-raising methods learned during the Liberty Loan campaigns to the increasing of college endowments. Rents are almost worse than food prices, for that matter; since the Armistice there has been an increasing shortage of houses and apartments, and the profiteering landlord has become an object of popular hate along with the profiteering middleman. Mr. Smith tells his wife that "these profiteers are about as bad as the I. W. W.'s." He could make no stronger statement.

Breakfast over, Mr. Smith gets into his automobile to drive to the office. The car

is as likely to be a Lexington, a Maxwell, a Briscoe, or a Templar as to be a Dodge, Buick, Chevrolet, Cadillac, or Hudson, and it surely will not be a Chrysler; Mr. Chrysler has just been elected first vice-president of the General Motors Corporation. Whatever the make of the car, it stands higher than the cars of the nineteen-thirties; the passengers look down upon their surroundings from an imposing altitude. The chances are nine to one that Mr. Smith's automobile is open (only 10.3 per cent of the cars manufactured in 1919 were closed). The vogue of the sedan is just beginning. Closed cars are still associated in the public mind with wealth; the hated profiteer of the newspaper cartoon rides in a limousine.

If Mr. Smith's car is one of the high, hideous, but efficient model T Fords of the day, let us watch him for a minute. He climbs in by the right-hand door (for there is no left-hand door by the front seat), reaches over to the wheel, and sets the spark and throttle levers in a position like that of the hands of a clock at ten minutes to three. Then, unless he has paid extra for a self-starter, he gets out to crank. Seizing the crank in his right hand (carefully, for a friend of his once broke his arm cranking), he slips his left forefinger through a loop of wire that controls the choke. He pulls the loop of wire, he revolves the crank mightily, and as the engine at last roars, he leaps to the trembling running-board, leans in, and moves the spark and throttle to twenty-five minutes of two. Perhaps he reaches the throttle before the engine falters into silence, but if it is a cold morning perhaps he does not. In that case, back to the crank again and the loop of wire. Mr. Smith wishes Mrs. Smith would come out and sit in the driver's seat and pull that spark lever down before the engine has time to die.

Finally he is at the wheel with the engine roaring as it should. He releases the emergency hand-brake, shoves his left foot against the low-speed pedal, and as the car sweeps loudly out into the street, he releases his left foot, lets the car into high gear, and is off. Now his only care is for that long hill down the street; yesterday he burned his brake on it, and this morning he must remember to brake with the reverse pedal, or the low-speed pedal, or both, or all three in alternation. (Jam your foot down on any of the three pedals and you slow the car.)

Mr. Smith is on the open road—a good deal more open than it will be a decade hence. On his way to work he passes hardly a third as many cars as he will pass in 1929; there are less than seven million passenger cars registered in the United States in 1919, as against over twenty-three million cars only ten years later. He is unlikely to find many concrete roads in his vicinity, and the lack of them is reflected in the speed regulations. A few states like California and New York permit a rate of thirty miles an hour in 1919, but the average limit is twenty (as against thirty-five or forty in 1931). The Illinois rate of 1919 is characteristic of the day; it limits the driver to fifteen miles in residential parts of cities, ten miles in built-up sections, and six miles on curves. The idea of making a hundred-mile trip in two and a half hours—as will constantly be done in the nineteen-thirties by drivers who consider themselves conservative—would seem to Mr. Smith perilous, and with the roads of 1919 to drive on he would be right.

In the course of his day at the office, Mr. Smith discusses business conditions. It appears that things are looking up. There was a period of uncertainty and falling stock prices after the Armistice, as huge government contracts were canceled and



## *Coming-of-Age in Our Time*

plants which had been running overtime on war work began to throw off men by the thousand, but since then conditions have been better. Everybody is talking about the bright prospects for international trade and American shipping. The shipyards are running full tilt. There are too many strikes going on, to be sure; it seems as if the demands of labor for higher and higher wages would never be satisfied, although Mr. Smith admits that in a way you can't blame the men, with prices still mounting week by week. But there is so much business activity that the men being turned out of army camps to look for jobs are being absorbed better than Mr. Smith ever thought they would be. It was back in the winter and early spring that there was so much talk about the ex-service men walking the streets without work; it was then that *Life*\* ran a cartoon which represented Uncle Sam saying to a soldier, "Nothing is too good for you, my boy! What would you like?" and the soldier answering, "A job." Now the boys seem to be sifting slowly but surely into the ranks of the employed, and the only clouds on the business horizon are strikes and Bolshevism and the dangerous wave of speculation in the stock market.

"Bull Market Taxes Nerves of Brokers," cry the headlines in the financial pages, and they speak of "Long Hours for Clerks." Is there a familiar ring to those phrases? Does it seem natural to you, remembering as you do the Big Bull Market of 1928 and 1929, that the decision to keep the Stock Exchange closed over the 31st of May, 1919, should elicit such newspaper comments as this: "The highly specialized machine which handles the purchase and sales of stocks and bonds in the New York market is fairly well exhausted and needs

a rest"? Then listen: in May, 1919, it was a long series of *million-and-a-half-share* days which was causing financiers to worry and the Federal Reserve Board to consider issuing a warning against speculation. During that year a new record of six two-million-share days was set up, and on only 145 days did the trading amount to over a million shares. What would Mr. Smith and his associates think if they were to be told that within eleven years there would occur a sixteen-million-share day; and that they would see the time when three-million-share days would be referred to as "virtual stagnation" or as "listless trading by professionals only, with the general public refusing to become interested"? The price of a seat on the New York Stock Exchange in 1919 ranged between \$60,000 and a new high record of \$110,000; it would be hard for Mr. Smith to believe that before the end of the decade seats on the Exchange would fetch a half million.

In those days of May, 1919, the record of daily Stock Exchange transactions occupied hardly a newspaper column. The Curb Market record referred to trading on a real curb—to that extraordinary outdoor market in Broad Street, New York, where boys with telephone receivers clamped to their heads hung out of windows high above the street and grimaced and wigwagged through the din to traders clustered on the pavement below. And if there was anything Mrs. Smith was certain not to have on her mind as she went shopping, it was the price of stocks. Yet the "unprecedented bull market" of 1919 brought fat profits to those who participated in it. Between February 15th and May 14th, Baldwin Locomotive rose from 72 to 93, General Motors from 130 to 191,

\* A humorous magazine of the time, whose name was taken over by the picture magazine of today. *Editors.*

United States Steel from 90 to 104½, and International Mercantile Marine common (to which traders were attracted on account of the apparently boundless possibilities of shipping) from 23 to 47½.

When Mr. Smith goes out to luncheon, he has to proceed to his club in a round-about way, for a regiment of soldiers just returned from Europe is on parade and the central thoroughfares of the city are blocked with crowds. It is a great season for parades, this spring of 1919. As the transports from Brest swing up New York Harbor, the men packed solid on the decks are greeted by Mayor Hylan's Committee of Welcome, represented sometimes by the Mayor's spruce young secretary, Grover Whalen, who in later years is to reduce welcoming to a science and raise it to an art. New York City has built in honor of the homecoming troops a huge plaster arch in Fifth Avenue at Madison Square, toward the design of which forty artists are said to have contributed. ("But the result," comments the *New York Tribune*, sadly, "suggests four hundred rather than forty. It holds everything that was ever on an arch anywhere, the lay mind suspects, not forgetting the horses on top of a certain justly celebrated Brandenburg Gate.") Farther up the Avenue, before the Public Library, there is a shrine of pylons and palms called the Court of Heroic Dead, of whose decorative effect the *Tribune* says, curtly, "Add perils of death." A few blocks to the north an arch of jewels is suspended above the Avenue "like a net of precious stones, between two white pillars surmounted by stars"; on this arch colored searchlights play at night with superb effect. The Avenue is hung with flags from end to end; and as the Twenty-seventh Division parades under the arches the air is white with

confetti and ticker tape, and the sidewalks are jammed with cheering crowds. Nor is New York alone in its enthusiasm for the returning soldiers; every other city has its victory parade, with the city elders on the reviewing stand and flags waving and the bayonets of the troops glistening in the spring sunlight and the bands playing "The Long, Long Trail." Not yet disillusioned, the nation welcomes its heroes—and the heroes only wish the fuss were all over and they could get into civilian clothes and sleep late in the mornings and do what they please, and try to forget.

Mr. and Mrs. Smith have been invited to a tea dance at one of the local hotels, and Mr. Smith hurries from his office to the scene of revelry. If the hotel is up to the latest wrinkles, it has a jazz-band instead of the traditional orchestra for dancing, but not yet does a saxophone player stand out in the foreground and contort from his instrument that piercing music, "endlessly sorrowful yet endlessly unsentimental, with no past, no memory, no future, no hope," which William Bolitho called the *Zeitgeist* of the Post-war Age. The jazz-band plays "I'm Always Chasing Rainbows," the tune which Harry Carroll wrote in wartime after Harrison Fisher persuaded him that Chopin's "Fantasie Impromptu" had the makings of a good ragtime tune. It plays, too, "Smiles" and "Dardanella" and "Hindustan" and "Japanese Sandman" and "I Love You Sunday," and that other song which is to give the Post-war Decade one of its most persistent and wearisome slang phrases, "I'll Say She Does." There are a good many military uniforms among the fox-trotting dancers. There is one French officer in blue; the days are not past when a foreign uniform adds the zest of wartime romance to any party. In the more

### *Coming-of-Age in Our Time*

dimly lighted palm-room there may be a juvenile petting party or two going on, but of this Mr. and Mrs. Smith are doubtless oblivious. F. Scott Fitzgerald has yet to confront a horrified republic with the Problem of the Younger Generation.

After a few dances, Mr. Smith wanders out to the bar (if this is not a dry state). He finds there a group of men downing Bronxes and Scotch highballs, and discussing with dismay the approach of prohibition. On the 1st of July the so-called Wartime Prohibition Law is to take effect (designed as a war measure, but not signed by the President until after the Armistice), and already the ratification of the Eighteenth Amendment has made it certain that prohibition is to be permanent. Even now, distilling and brewing are forbidden. Liquor is therefore expensive, as the frequenters of midnight cabarets are learning to their cost. Yet here is the bar, still quite legally doing business. Of course there is not a woman within eyeshot of it; drinking by women is unusual in 1919, and drinking at a bar is an exclusively masculine prerogative. Although Mr. and Mrs. Smith's hosts may perhaps serve cocktails before dinner this evening, Mr. and Mrs. Smith have never heard of cocktail parties as a substitute for tea parties.

As Mr. Smith stands with his foot on the brass rail, he listens to the comments on the coming of prohibition. There is some indignant talk about it, but even here the indignation is by no means unanimous. One man, as he tosses off his Bronx, says that he'll miss his liquor for a time, he supposes, but he thinks "his boys will be better off for living in a world where there is no alcohol"; and two or three others agree with him. Prohibition has an overwhelming majority behind it throughout the United States; the Spartan fervor

of war-time has not yet cooled. Nor is there anything ironical in the expressed assumption of these men that when the Eighteenth Amendment goes into effect, alcohol will be banished from the land. They look forward vaguely to an endless era of actual drought.

At the dinner party to which Mr. and Mrs. Smith go that evening, some of the younger women may be bold enough to smoke, but they probably puff their cigarettes self-consciously, even defiantly. (The national consumption of cigarettes in 1919, excluding the very large sizes, is less than half of what it will be by 1930.)

After dinner the company may possibly go to the movies to see Charlie Chaplin in "Shoulder Arms" or Douglas Fairbanks in "The Knickerbocker Buckaroo" or Mary Pickford in "Daddy Long Legs," or Theda Bara, or Pearl White, or Griffith's much touted and much wept-at "Broken Blossoms." Or they may play auction bridge (not contract, of course). Mah Jong, which a few years hence will be almost obligatory, is still over the horizon. They may discuss such best sellers of the days as *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*, Tarkington's *The Magnificent Ambersons*, Conrad's *Arrow of Gold*, Brand Whitlock's *Belgium*, and Wells's *The Undying Fire*. (The *Outline of History* is still unwritten.) They may go to the theater: the New York successes of May, 1919, include "Friendly Enemies," "Three Faces East," and "The Better 'Ole," which have been running ever since war-time and are still going strong, and also "Listen, Lester," Gillette in "Dear Brutus," Frances Starr in "Tiger! Tiger!" and—to satisfy a growing taste for bedroom farce—such tidbits as "Up in Mabel's Room." The Theater Guild is about to launch its first drama, Ervine's "John Ferguson." The members

## Only Yesterday

of the senior class at Princeton have just voted "Lightnin'" their favorite play (after "Macbeth" and "Hamlet," for which they cast the votes expected of educated men), and their favorite actresses, in order of preference, are Norma Talmadge, Elsie Ferguson, Marguerite Clark, Constance Talmadge, and Madge Kennedy.

One thing the Smiths certainly will not do this evening. They will not listen to the radio.

For there is no such thing as radio broadcasting. Here and there a mechanically inclined boy has a wireless set, with which, if he knows the Morse code, he may listen to messages from ships at sea and from land stations equipped with sending apparatus. The radiophone has been so far developed that men flying in an airplane over Manhattan have talked with other men in an office-building below. But the broadcasting of speeches and music—well, it was tried years ago by DeForest, and "nothing came of it." Not until the spring of 1920 will Frank Conrad of the Westinghouse Company of East Pittsburgh, who has been sending out phonograph music and baseball scores

from the barn which he has rigged up as a spare-time research station, find that so many amateur wireless operators are listening to them that a Pittsburgh newspaper has had the bright idea of advertising radio equipment "which may be used by those who listen to Dr. Conrad's programs." And not until this advertisement appears will the Westinghouse officials decide to open the first broadcasting station in history in order to stimulate the sale of their supplies.

One more word about Mr. and Mrs. Smith and we may dismiss them for the night. Not only have they never heard of radio broadcasting; they have never heard of Coué, the Dayton Trial, cross-word puzzles, bathing-beauty contests, John J. Raskob, racketeers, Teapot Dome, Coral Gables, the *American Mercury*, Sacco and Vanzetti, companionate marriage, brokers' loan statistics, Michael Arlen, the Wall Street explosion, confession magazines, the Hall-Mills case, Radio stock, speakeasies, Al Capone, automatic traffic lights, or Charles A. Lindbergh.

The Post-war Decade lies before them.

## Back to Normalcy

Early on the morning of November 11, 1918, President Woodrow Wilson wrote in pencil, on an ordinary sheet of White House stationery, a message to the American people:

My Fellow Countrymen: The armistice was signed this morning. Everything for which America fought has been accomplished. It will now be our fortunate duty to assist by example, by sober, friendly counsel, and by material aid in the establishment of just democracy throughout the world.

Never was document more Wilsonian. In those three sentences spoke the Puritan schoolmaster, cool in a time of great emotions, calmly setting the lesson for the day; the moral idealist, intent on a peace of reconciliation rather than a peace of hate; and the dogmatic prophet of democracy, who could not dream that the sort of institutions in which he had believed all his life were not inevitably the best for all nations everywhere. Yet the spirit of the message suggests, at the same time, that of another war President. It was such

a document as Lincoln might have written.

But if the man in the White House was thinking of Abraham Lincoln as he wrote those sentences—and no doubt he was—there was something which perhaps he overlooked. Counsels of idealism sometimes fail in the relaxation that comes with peace. Lincoln had not lived to see what happens to a policy of "sober, friendly counsel" in a post-war decade; he had been taken off in the moment of triumph.

Woodrow Wilson was not to be so fortunate.

What a day that 11th of November was! It was not quite three o'clock in the morning when the State Department gave out to the dozing newspaper men the news that the Armistice had really been signed. Four days before, a false report of the end of hostilities had thrown the whole United States into a delirium of joy. People had poured out of offices and shops and paraded the streets singing and shouting, ringing bells, blowing tin horns, smashing one another's hats, cheering soldiers in uniform, draping themselves in American flags, gathering in closely packed crowds before the newspaper bulletin boards, making a wild and hilarious holiday; in New York, Fifth Avenue had been closed to traffic and packed solid with surging men and women, while down from the windows of the city fluttered 155 tons of ticker tape and torn paper. It did not seem possible that such an outburst could be repeated. But it was.

By half-past four on the morning of the 11th, sirens, whistles, and bells were rousing the sleepers in a score of American cities, and newsboys were shouting up and down the dark streets. At first people were

slow to credit the report; they had been fooled once and were not to be fooled again. Along an avenue in Washington, under the windows of the houses of government officials, a boy announced with painstaking articulation, "THE WAR IS OVAH! OFFICIAL GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCEMENT CONFIRMS THE NEWS!" He did not mumble as newsboys ordinarily do; he knew that this was a time to convince the skeptical by being intelligible and specific. The words brought incredible relief. A new era of peace and of hope was beginning—had already begun.

So the tidings spread throughout the country. In city after city mid-morning found offices half deserted, signs tacked up on shop doors reading "CLOSED FOR THE KAISER'S FUNERAL," people marching up and down the streets again as they had four days previously, pretty girls kissing every soldier they saw, automobiles slowly creeping through the crowds and intentionally backfiring to add to the noise of horns and rattles and every other sort of din-making device. Eight hundred Barnard College girls snake-danced on Morningside Heights in New York; and in Times Square, early in the morning, a girl mounted the platform of "Liberty Hall," a building set up for war-campaign purposes, and sang the "Doxology" before hushed crowds.

Yet as if to mock the Wilsonian statement about "sober, friendly counsel," there were contrasting celebrations in which the mood was not that of pious thanksgiving, but of triumphant hate. Crowds burned the Kaiser in effigy. In New York, a dummy of the Kaiser was washed down Wall Street with a firehose; men carried a coffin made of soapboxes up and down Fifth Avenue, shouting that the Kaiser

was within it, "resting in pieces"; and on Broadway at Seventieth Street a boy drew pictures of the Kaiser over and over again on the sidewalk, to give the crowds the delight of trampling on them.

So the new era of peace began.

But a million men—to paraphrase Bryan—cannot spring from arms overnight. There were still over three million and a half Americans in the military service, over two million of them in Europe. Uniforms were everywhere. Even after the tumult and shouting of November 11th had died, the Expeditionary Forces were still in the trenches, making ready for the long, cautious march into Germany; civilians were still saving sugar and eating strange dark breads and saving coal; it was not until ten days had passed that the "lightless" edict of the Fuel Administration was withdrawn, and Broadway and a dozen lesser white ways in other cities blazed once more; the railroads were still operated by the government, and one bought one's tickets at United States Railroad Administration Consolidated Ticket Offices; the influenza epidemic, which had taken more American lives than had the Germans, and had caused thousands of men and women to go about fearfully with white cloth masks over their faces, was only just abating; the newspapers were packed with reports from the armies in Europe, news of the revolution in Germany, of Mr. Wilson's peace preparations, of the United War Work Campaign, to the exclusion of almost everything else; and day after day, week after week, month after month, the casualty lists went on, and from Maine to Oregon men and women searched them in daily apprehension.

November would normally have brought

the climax of the football season, but now scratch college teams, made up mostly of boys who had been wearing the uniform of the Students' Army Training Corps, played benefit games "to put the War Work Fund over the top"; and further to strengthen the will to give, Charlie Brickley of Harvard drop-kicked a football across Wall Street into the arms of Jack Gates of Yale on the balcony of the Stock Exchange. Not only the news columns of the papers, but the advertisements also, showed the domination of war-time emotions. Next to an editorial on "The Right to Hate the Huns," or a letter suggesting that the appropriate punishment for the Kaiser would be to deport him from country to country, always as an "undesirable alien," the reader would find a huge United War Work Fund advertisement, urging him to GIVE—GIVE—GIVE! On another page, under the title of PREPARING AMERICA TO REBUILD THE WORLD, he would find a patriotic blast beginning, "Now that liberty has triumphed, now that the forces of Right have begun their reconstruction of humanity's morals, the world faces a material task of equal magnitude," and not until he had waded through several more sentences of sonorous rhetoric would he discover that this "material task" was to be accomplished through the use of Blank's Steel Windows.

And even as the process of demobilization got definitely under way, as the soldiers began to troop home from the camps, as censorship was done away with and lights were permitted to burn brightly again and women began to buy sugar with an easy conscience; even as this glorious peace began to seem a reality and not a dream, the nation went on thinking with the mind of people at war. They had

learned during the preceding nineteen months to strike down the thing they hated; not to argue or hesitate, but to strike. Germany had been struck down, but it seemed that there was another danger on the horizon. Bolshevism was spreading from Russia through Europe; Bolshevism might spread to the United States. They struck at it—or at what they thought was it. A week after the Armistice, Mayor Hylan of New York forbade the display of the red flag in the streets and ordered the police to “disperse all unlawful assemblages.” A few nights later, while the Socialists were holding a mass meeting in Madison Square Garden, five hundred soldiers and sailors gathered from the surrounding streets and tried to storm the doors. It took twenty-two mounted policemen to break up the milling mob and restore order. The next evening there was another riot before the doors of the Palm Garden, farther up town, where a meeting of sympathy for Revolutionary Russia was being held under the auspices of the Women’s International League. Again soldiers and sailors were the chief offenders. They packed Fifty-eighth Street for a block, shouting and trying to break their way into the Palm Garden, and in the *mêlée* six persons were badly beaten up. One of the victims was a conservative stockbroker. He was walking up Lexington Avenue with a lady, and seeing the yelling crowd, he asked someone what all the excitement was about. A sailor called out, “Hey, fellows, here’s another of the Bolsheviks,” and in a moment a score of men had leaped upon him, ripped off his tie, and nearly knocked him unconscious. These demonstrations were to prove the first of a long series of post-war anti-Red riots.

The nation at war had formed the habit of summary action, and it was not soon unlearned. The circumstances and available methods had changed, that was all. Employers who had watched with resentment the rising scale of wages paid to labor, under the encouragement of a government that wanted no disaffection in the ranks of the workers, now felt that their chance had come. The Germans were beaten; the next thing to do was to teach labor a lesson. Labor agitators were a bunch of Bolsheviks, anyhow, and it was about time that a man had a chance to make a decent profit in his business. Meanwhile labor, facing a steadily mounting cost of living, and realizing that it was no longer unpatriotic to strike for higher wages, decided to teach the silk-stockinged profiteering employer a lesson in his turn. The result was a bitter series of strikes and lockouts.

There was a summary action with regard to liquor, too. During the war alcohol had been an obvious menace to the fighting efficiency of the nation. The country, already largely dry by state law and local option, had decided to banish the saloon once and for all. War-time psychology was dominant; no halfway measure would serve. The War-time Prohibition Act was already on the books and due to take effect July 1, 1919. But this was not enough. The Eighteenth Amendment, which would make prohibition permanent and (so it was thought) effective, had been passed by Congress late in 1917, and many of the states had ratified it before the war ended. With the convening of the state legislatures in January, 1919, the movement for ratification went ahead with amazing speed. The New York *Tribune* said that it was “as if a sailing-ship on a

windless ocean were sweeping ahead, propelled by some invisible force." "Prohibition seems to be the fashion, just as drinking once was," exclaimed the *Times* editorially. By January 16th—within nine weeks of the Armistice—the necessary thirty-six States had ratified the Amendment. Even New York State fell in line a few days later. Whisky and the "liquor ring" were struck at as venomously as were the Reds. There were some misgivings, to be sure; there were those who pointed out that three million men in uniform might not like the new dispensation; but the country was not in the mood to think twice. Prohibition went through on the tide of the war spirit of "no compromise."

Yet though the headlong temper of war-time persisted after the Armistice, in one respect the coming of peace brought about a profound change. During the war the nation had gone about its tasks in a mood of exaltation. Top sergeants might remark that the only good Hun was a dead one and that this stuff about making the world safe for democracy was all bunk; four-minute speakers might shout that the Kaiser ought to be boiled in oil; the fact remained that millions of Americans were convinced that they were fighting in a holy cause, for the rights of oppressed nations, for the end of all war forever, for all that the schoolmaster in Washington so eloquently preached. The singing of the "Doxology" by the girl in Times Square represented their true feeling as truly as the burning of the Kaiser

in effigy. The moment the Armistice was signed, however, a subtle change began.

Now those who had never liked Wilson, who thought that he had stayed out of the war too long, that milk and water ran in his veins instead of blood, that he should never have been forgiven for his treatment of Roosevelt and Wood, that he was a dangerous radical at heart and a menace to the capitalistic system, that he should never have appealed to the country for the election of a Democratic Congress, or that his idea of going to Paris himself to the Peace Conference was a sign of egomania—these people began to speak out freely. There were others who were tired of applauding the French, or who had ideas of their own about the English and the English attitude toward Ireland, or who were sick of hearing about "our noble Allies" in general, or who thought that we had really gone into the war to save our own skins and that the Wilsonian talk about making the world safe for democracy was dangerous and hypocritical nonsense. They, too, began to speak out freely. Now one could say with impunity, "We've licked the Germans and we're going to lick these damned Bolsheviks, and it's about time we got after Wilson and his crew of pacifists." The tension of the war was relaxing, the bubble of idealism was pricked. As the first weeks of peace slipped away, it began to appear doubtful whether the United States was quite as ready as Woodrow Wilson had thought "to assist in the establishment of just democracy throughout the world."



# WINTERSET

by MAXWELL ANDERSON

## CHARACTERS

TROCK	HERMAN
SHADOW	LUCIA
GARTH	PINY
MIRIAMNE	A SAILOR
ESDRAS	STREET URCHIN
THE HOBO	POLICEMAN
1ST GIRL	RADICAL
2ND GIRL	SERGEANT
JUDGE GAUNT	<i>Non-speaking</i>
MIO	URCHINS
CARR	TWO MEN IN BLUE SERGE

## ACT I

### SCENE I

*[The scene is the bank of a river under a bridgehead. A gigantic span starts from the rear of the stage and appears to lift over the heads of the audience and out to the left. At the right rear is a wall of solid supporting masonry. To the left an apartment building abuts against the bridge and forms the left wall of the stage with a dark basement window and a door in the brick wall. To the right, and in the foreground, an outcropping of original rock makes a barricade behind which one may enter through a cleft. To the rear, against the masonry, two sheds have been built by waifs and strays for shelter. The river bank, in the foreground, is black rock worn smooth by years of trampling. There is room for exit and entrance to the left around the apartment house, also around the rock to the right. A single street lamp is seen at the left—and a glimmer of apartment lights in the back-*

*ground beyond. It is an early, dark December morning.*

TWO YOUNG MEN IN SERGE *lean against the masonry, matching bills. TROCK and SHADOW come in from the left.*

TROCK. Go back and watch the car.

*[The TWO YOUNG MEN go out. TROCK walks to the corner and looks toward the city.]*

You roost of punks and gulls! Sleep, sleep it off,

whatever you had last night, get down in warm,

one big ham-fat against another—sleep, cling, sleep and rot! Rot out your pasty guts

with diddling, you had no brain to begin.

If you had there'd be no need for us to sleep on iron who had too much brains for you.

SHADOW. Now look, Trock, look, what would the warden say to talk like that?

TROCK. May they die as I die!

By God, what life they've left me  
they shall keep me well! I'll have that out  
of them—

these pismires that walk like men!

SHADOW. Because, look, chief,  
it's all against science and penology  
for you to get out and begin to cuss that  
way

before your prison vittles are out of you.  
Hell,

you're supposed to leave the pen full of  
high thought,  
kind of noble-like, loving toward all man-  
kind,

ready to kiss their feet—or whatever parts  
they stick out toward you. Look at me!

TROCK. I see you.

And even you may not live as long as you  
think.

You think too many things are funny.

Well, laugh.

But it's not so funny.

SHADOW. Come on, Trock, you know  
me.

Anything you say goes, but give me leave  
to kid a little.

TROCK. Then laugh at somebody else!

It's a lot safer! They've soaked me once  
too often

in that vat of poisoned hell they keep up-  
state

to soak men in, and I'm rotten inside,  
I'm all

one liquid puke inside where I had lungs  
once, like yourself! And now they want  
to get me

and stir me in again—and that'd kill me—  
and that's fine for them. But before that  
happens to me

a lot of these healthy boys'll know what  
it's like

when you try to breathe and have no place  
to put air—

they'll learn it from me!

SHADOW. They've got nothing on you,  
chief.

TROCK. I don't know yet. That's what  
I'm here to find out.

If they've got what they might have

It's not a year this time—

no, nor ten. It's screwed down under a  
lid.—

I can die quick enough, without help.

SHADOW. You're the skinny kind  
that lives forever.

TROCK. He gave me a half a year,  
the doc at the gate.

SHADOW. Jesus.

TROCK. Six months I get,  
and the rest's dirt, six feet.

[LUCIA, the street-piano man, comes in  
right from behind the rock and goes  
to the shed where he keeps his piano.

PINY, the apple-woman, follows and  
stands in the entrance. LUCIA speaks  
to ESTRELLA, who still stands facing

SHADOW.]

LUCIA. Morning.

[TROCK and SHADOW go out round the  
apartment house without speaking.]

PINY. Now what would you call them?

LUCIA. Maybe something da river  
washed up.

PINY. Nothing ever washed him—that  
black one.

LUCIA. Maybe not, maybe so. More like  
his pa and ma raise-a heem in da cellar.  
[He wheels out the piano.]

PINY. He certainly gave me a turn. [She  
lays a hand on the rock.]

LUCIA. You don't live-a right, ol' gal.  
Take heem easy. Look on da bright-a  
side. Never say-a die. Me, every day in  
every way I getta be da regular heller.  
[He starts out.]

CURTAIN

## Coming-of-Age in Our Time

### SCENE 2

*[A cellar apartment under the apartment building, floored with cement and roofed with huge boa constrictor pipes that run slantwise from left to right, dwarfing the room. An outside door opens to the left and a door at the right rear leads to the interior of the place. A low squat window to the left. A table at the rear and a few chairs and books make up the furniture. GARTH, son of ESDRAS, sits alone, holding a violin upside down to inspect a crack at its base. He lays the bow on the floor and runs his fingers over the joint. MIRIAMNE enters from the rear, a girl of fifteen. GARTH looks up, then down again.]*

MIRIAMNE. Garth—

GARTH. The glue lets go. It's the steam, I guess.

It splits the hair on your head.

MIRIAMNE. It can't be mended?

GARTH. I can't mend it.

No doubt there are fellows somewhere who'd mend it for a dollar—and glad to do it.

That is if I had a dollar.—Got a dollar?

No, I thought not.

MIRIAMNE. Garth, you've sat at home here three days now. You haven't gone out at all.

Something frightens you.

GARTH. Yes?

MIRIAMNE. And father's frightened.

He reads without knowing where. When a shadow falls across the page he waits for a blow to follow

after the shadow. Then in a little while he puts his book down softly and goes out to see who passed.

GARTH. A bill collector, maybe.

We haven't paid the rent.

MIRIAMNE. No.

GARTH. You're a bright girl, sis.— You see too much. You run along and cook.

Why don't you go to school?

MIRIAMNE. I don't like school. They whisper behind my back.

GARTH. Yes? about what?

MIRIAMNE. What did the lawyer mean that wrote to you?

GARTH [*rising*]. What lawyer?

MIRIAMNE. I found a letter on the floor of your room. He said, "Don't get me wrong, but stay in out of the rain the next few days, just for instance."

GARTH. I thought I burned that letter.

MIRIAMNE. Afterward you did. And then what was printed about the Estrella gang—you hid it from me, you and father. What is it—about this murder—?

GARTH. Will you shut up, you fool!

MIRIAMNE. But if you know why don't you tell them, Garth? If it's true—what they say—you knew all the time Romagna wasn't guilty, and could have said so—

GARTH. Everybody knew Romagna wasn't guilty! But they weren't listening to evidence in his favor. They didn't want it.

They don't want it now.

MIRIAMNE. But was that why they never called on you?—

GARTH. So far as I know they never'd heard of me—and I can assure you

*Winterset*

I knew nothing about it—

MIRIAMNE. But something's wrong—  
and it worries father—

GARTH. What could be wrong?

MIRIAMNE. I don't know. [*A pause.*]

GARTH. And I don't know. You're a  
good kid, Miriamne,  
but you see too many movies. I wasn't  
mixed up

in any murder, and I don't mean to be.

If I had a dollar to get my fiddle fixed  
and another to hire a hall, by God I'd  
fiddle

some of the prodigies back into Sunday  
School

where they belong, but I won't get either,  
and so

I sit here and bite my nails—but if you  
hoped

I had some criminal romantic past  
you'll have to look again!

MIRIAMNE. Oh, Garth, forgive me—

But I want you to be so far above such  
things

nothing could frighten you. When you  
seem to shrink

and be afraid, and you're the brother I  
love,

I want to run there and cry, if there's any  
question

they care to ask, you'll be quick and glad  
to answer,

for there's nothing to conceal!

GARTH. And that's all true—

MIRIAMNE. But then I remember—  
how you dim the lights—

and we go early to bed—and speak in  
whispers—

and I could think there's a death some-  
where behind us—

an evil death—

GARTH [*hearing a step*].

Now for God's sake, be quiet!

[ESDRAS, *an old rabbi with a kindly face,*

*enters from the outside. He is hur-  
ried and troubled.*]

ESDRAS. I wish to speak alone with some-  
one here

if I may have this room. Miriamne—

MIRIAMNE [*turning to go*]. Yes, father.  
[*The outer door is suddenly thrown open.*

TROCK *appears.*]

TROCK [*after a pause*].

You'll excuse me for not knocking.

[*SHADOW follows TROCK in.*]

Sometimes it's best to come in quiet. Some-  
times

it's a good way to go out. Garth's home, I  
see.

He might not have been here if I made a  
point

of knocking at doors.

GARTH. How are you, Trock?

TROCK. I guess

you can see how I am. [*To MIRIAMNE.*]

Stay here. Stay where you are.

We'd like to make your acquaintance.

—If you want the facts

I'm no better than usual, thanks. Not  
enough sun,

my physician tells me. Too much close  
confinement.

A lack of exercise and an overplus  
of beans in the diet. You've done well, no  
doubt?

GARTH. I don't know what makes you  
think so.

TROCK. Who's the family?

GARTH. My father and my sister.

TROCK. Happy to meet you.

Step inside a minute. The boy and I have  
something to talk about.

ESDRAS. No, no—he's said nothing—  
nothing, sir, nothing!

TROCK. When I say go out, you go—

ESDRAS [*pointing to the door*]. Miri-  
amne—

GARTH. Go on out, both of you!

## *Coming-of-Age in Our Time*

ESDRAS. Oh, sir—I'm old—  
old and unhappy—

GARTH. Go on!

[MIRIAMNE and ESDRAS go inside.]

TROCK. And if you listen  
I'll riddle that door!

[SHADOW shuts the door behind them and  
stands against it.]

I just got out, you see,  
and I pay my first call on you.

GARTH. Maybe you think  
I'm not in the same jam you are.

TROCK. That's what I do think.  
Who started looking this up?

GARTH. I wish I knew,  
and I wish he was in hell! Some damned  
professor  
with nothing else to do. If you saw his  
stuff  
you know as much as I do.

TROCK. It wasn't you  
turning state's evidence?

GARTH. Hell, Trock, use your brain!  
The case was closed. They burned Ro-  
magna for it  
and that finished it. Why should I look  
for trouble  
and maybe get burned myself?

TROCK. Boy, I don't know,  
but I just thought I'd find out.

GARTH. I'm going straight, Trock.  
I can play this thing, and I'm trying to  
make a living.  
I haven't talked and nobody's talked to  
me.

Christ—it's the last thing I'd want!

TROCK. Your old man knows.

GARTH. That's where I got the money  
that last time  
when you needed it. He had a little saved  
up,  
but I had to tell him to get it. He's as  
safe  
as Shadow there.

TROCK [*looking at SHADOW*].  
There could be people safer  
than that son-of-a-bitch.

SHADOW. Who?

TROCK. You'd be safer dead  
along with some other gorillas.

SHADOW. It's beginning to look  
as if you'd feel safer with everybody dead,  
the whole god-damn world.

TROCK. I would. These Jesus-bitten  
professors! Looking up their half-ass cases!  
We've got enough without that.

GARTH. There's no evidence  
to reopen the thing.

TROCK. And suppose they called on you  
and asked you to testify?

GARTH. Why then I'd tell 'em  
that all I know is what I read in the  
papers.

And I'd stick to that.

TROCK. How much does your sister  
know?

GARTH. I'm honest with you, Trock. She  
read my name  
in the professor's pamphlet, and she was  
scared  
the way anybody would be. She got noth-  
ing

from me, and anyway she'd go to the  
chair

herself before she'd send me there.

TROCK. Like hell.

GARTH. Besides, who wants to go to  
trial again  
except the radicals?—You and I won't spill  
and unless we did there's nothing to take  
to court

as far as I know. Let the radicals go on  
howling

about getting a dirty deal. They always  
howl

and nobody gives a damn. This professor's  
red—

everybody knows it.

TROCK. You're forgetting the judge.  
Where's the damn judge?

GARTH. What judge?

TROCK. Read the morning papers.  
It says Judge Gaunt's gone off his nut.

He's got  
that damn trial on his mind, and been  
going round  
proving to everybody he was right all the  
time  
and the radicals were guilty—stopping  
people  
in the street to prove it—and now he's  
nuts entirely  
and nobody knows where he is.

GARTH. Why don't they know?

TROCK. Because he's on the loose some-  
where! They've got  
the police of three cities looking for him.

GARTH. Judge Gaunt?

TROCK. Yes. Judge Gaunt.

SHADOW. Why should that worry you?  
He's crazy, ain't he? And even if he  
wasn't

he's arguing on your side. You're jittery,  
chief.

God, all the judges are looney. You've got  
the jitters,  
and you'll damn well give yourself away  
some time

peeing yourself in public.

[TROCK half turns toward SHADOW in  
anger.]

Don't jump the gun now,  
I've got pockets in my clothes, too.

[His hand is in his coat pocket.]

TROCK. All right. Take it easy.

[He takes his hand from his pocket, and  
SHADOW does the same. To GARTH.]

Maybe you're lying to me and maybe  
you're not.

Stay at home a few days.

GARTH. Sure thing. Why not?

TROCK. And when I say stay home I  
mean stay home.

If I have to go looking for you you'll stay  
a long time

wherever I find you.

[To SHADOW.] Come on. We'll get out of  
here.

[To GARTH.] Be seeing you.

[SHADOW and TROCK go out. After a pause  
GARTH walks over to his chair and  
picks up the violin. Then he puts it  
down and goes to the inside door,  
which he opens.]

GARTH. He's gone.

[MIRIAMNE enters, ESDRAS behind her.]

MIRIAMNE [going up to GARTH].

Let's not stay here.

[She puts her hands on his arms.]

I thought he'd come for something—hor-  
rible.

Is he coming back?

GARTH. I don't know.

MIRIAMNE. Who is he, Garth?

GARTH. He'd kill me if I told you who  
he is,  
that is, if he knew.

MIRIAMNE. Then don't say it—

GARTH. Yes, and I'll say it! I was with a  
gang one time  
that robbed a pay roll. I saw a murder  
done  
and Trock Estrella did it. If that got out  
I'd go to the chair and so would he—  
that's why  
he was here today—

MIRIAMNE. But that's not true—

ESDRAS. He says it  
to frighten you, child.

GARTH. Oh, no I don't! I say it  
because I've held it in too long! I'm  
damned  
if I sit here forever and look at the door,  
waiting for Trock with his submachine  
gun, waiting  
for police with a warrant!—I say I'm  
damned, and I am,  
no matter what I do! These piddling scales

## *Coming-of-Age in Our Time*

on a violin—first position, third, fifth,  
arpeggios in E—and what I'm thinking  
is Romagna dead for the murder—dead  
while I sat here  
dying inside—dead for the thing Trock did  
while I looked on—and I could have saved  
him, yes—  
but I sat here and let him die instead of  
me  
because I wanted to live! Well, it's no life,  
and it doesn't matter who I tell, because  
I mean to get it over!

MIRIAMNE. Garth, it's not true!

GARTH. I'd take some scum down with  
me if I died—  
that'd be one good deed—

ESDRAS. Son, son, you're mad—  
someone will hear—

GARTH. Then let them hear! I've lived  
with ghosts too long, and lied too long.

God damn you  
if you keep me from the truth!—  
[*He turns away.*] Oh, God damn the  
world!

I don't want to die!

ESDRAS. I should have known.  
I thought you hard and sullen,  
Garth, my son. And you were a child,  
and hurt  
with a wound that might be healed.  
—All men have crimes,  
and most of them are hidden, and many  
are heavy  
as yours must be to you.

[GARTH *sobs.*]  
They walk the streets  
to buy and sell, but a spreading crimson  
stain  
tinges the inner vestments, touches flesh,  
and burns the quick. You're not alone.

GARTH. I'm alone  
in this

ESDRAS. Yes, if you hold with the world  
that only

those who die suddenly should be re-  
venged.

But those whose hearts are cancered, drop  
by drop  
in small ways, little by little, till they've  
borne  
all they can bear, and die—these deaths  
will go  
unpunished now as always. When we're  
young  
we have faith in what is seen, but when  
we're old  
we know that what is seen is traced in air  
and built on water. There's no guilt under  
heaven,  
just as there's no heaven, till men believe  
it—  
no earth, till men have seen it, and have a  
word  
to say this is the earth.

GARTH. Well, I say there's an earth,  
and I say I'm guilty on it, guilty as hell.

ESDRAS. Yet till it's known you bear no  
guilt at all—  
unless you wish. The days go by like  
film,  
like a long written scroll, a figured veil  
unrolling out of darkness into fire  
and utterly consumed. And on this veil,  
running in sounds and symbols of men's  
minds  
reflected back, life flickers and is shadow  
going toward flame. Only what men can  
see  
exists in that shadow. Why must you rise  
and cry out:

That was I, there in the ravelled tapestry,  
there, in that pistol flash, when the man  
was killed.

I was there, and was one, and am blood-  
stained!

Let the wind  
and fire take that hour to ashes out of  
time

## Winterset

and out of mind! This thing that men  
call justice,  
this blind snake that strikes men down  
in the dark,  
mindless with fury, keep your hand back  
from it,  
pass by in silence—let it be forgotten, for-  
gotten!—

Oh, my son, my son—have pity!

MIRIAMNE. But if it was true  
and someone died—then it was more than  
shadow—

and it doesn't blow away—

GARTH. Well, it was true.

ESDRAS. Say it if you must. If you have  
heart to die,  
say it, and let them take what's left—  
there was little  
to keep, even before—

GARTH. Oh, I'm a coward—

I always was. I'll be quiet and live. I'll  
live

even if I have to crawl. I know.

[*He gets up and goes into the inner  
room.*]

MIRIAMNE. Is it better  
to tell a lie and live?

ESDRAS. Yes, child. It's better.

MIRIAMNE. But if I had to do it—  
I think I'd die.

ESDRAS. Yes, child. Because you're young.

MIRIAMNE. Is that the only reason?

ESDRAS. The only reason.

CURTAIN

### SCENE 3

[*Under the bridge, evening of the same  
day. When the curtain rises MIRIAMNE is  
sitting alone on the ledge at the rear of  
the apartment house. A spray of light falls  
on her from a street lamp above. She shiv-  
ers a little in her thin coat, but sits still as  
if heedless of the weather. Through the*

*rocks on the other side a TRAMP comes  
down to the river bank, hunting a place  
to sleep. He goes softly to the apple-  
woman's hut and looks in, then turns  
away, evidently not daring to pre-empt it.  
He looks at MIRIAMNE doubtfully. The  
door of the street-piano man is shut. The  
vagabond passes it and picks carefully  
among some rags and shavings to the  
right. MIRIAMNE looks up and sees him  
but makes no sign. She looks down again,  
and the man curls himself up in a make-  
shift bed in the corner, pulling a piece of  
sacking over his shoulders. Two GIRLS  
come in round the apartment house.]*

1ST GIRL. Honest, I never heard of any-  
thing so romantic. Because you never liked  
him.

2ND GIRL. I certainly never did.

1ST GIRL. You've got to tell me how it  
happened. You've got to.

2ND GIRL. I couldn't. As long as I live  
I couldn't. Honest, it was terrible. It was  
terrible.

1ST GIRL. What was so terrible?

2ND GIRL. The way it happened.

1ST GIRL. Oh, please—not to a soul,  
never.

2ND GIRL. Well, you know how I hated  
him because he had such a big mouth. So  
he reached over and grabbed me, and I  
began all falling to pieces inside, the way  
you do—and I said, "Oh no you don't mis-  
ter," and started screaming and kicked a  
hole through the windshield and lost a  
shoe, and he let go and was cursing and  
growling because he borrowed the car and  
didn't have money to pay for the wind-  
shield, and he started to cry, and I got so  
sorry for him I let him, and now he wants  
to marry me.

1ST GIRL. Honest, I never heard of any-  
thing so romantic! [*She sees the sleeping*



## Coming-of-Age in Our Time

TRAMP.] My God, what you won't see!  
[*They give the TRAMP a wide berth, and go out right. The TRAMP sits up looking about him. JUDGE GAUNT, an elderly, quiet man, well dressed but in clothes that have seen some weather, comes in uncertainly from the left. He holds a small clipping in his hand and goes up to the HOBO.*]

GAUNT [*tentatively*]. Your pardon, sir. Your pardon, but perhaps you can tell me the name of this street.

HOBO. Huh?

GAUNT. The name of this street?

HOBO. This ain't no street.

GAUNT. There, where the street lamps are.

HOBO. That's the alley.

GAUNT. Thank you. It has a name, no doubt?

HOBO. That's the alley.

GAUNT. I see. I won't trouble you. You wonder why I ask, I daresay.—I'm a stranger.—Why do you look at me? [*He steps back.*] I—I'm not the man you think. You've mistaken me, sir.

HOBO. Huh?

GAUNT. Perhaps misled by a resemblance. But you're mistaken—I had an errand in this city. It's only by accident that I'm here—

HOBO [*muttering*]. You go to hell.

GAUNT [*going nearer to him, bending over him*]. Yet why should I deceive you? Before God, I held the proofs in my hands. I hold them still. I tell you the defense was cunning beyond belief, and unscrupulous in its use of propaganda—they gagged at nothing—not even—[*He rises.*] No, no—I'm sorry—this will hardly interest you. I'm sorry. I have an errand.

[*He looks toward the street. ESDRAS enters from the basement and goes to MIRIAMNE. The JUDGE steps back into the shadows.*]

ESDRAS. Come in, my daughter. You'll be cold here.

MIRIAMNE. After a while.

ESDRAS. You'll be cold. There's a storm coming.

MIRIAMNE. I didn't want him to see me crying. That was all.

ESDRAS. I know.

MIRIAMNE. I'll come soon.

[*ESDRAS turns reluctantly and goes out the way he came. MIRIAMNE rises to go in, pausing to dry her eyes. MIO and CARR, road boys of seventeen or so, come round the apartment house. The JUDGE has disappeared.*]

CARR. Thought you said you were never coming east again.

MIO. Yeah, but—I heard something changed my mind.

CARR. Same old business?

MIO. Yes. Just as soon not talk about it.

CARR. Where did you go from Portland?

MIO. Fishing—I went fishing. God's truth.

CARR. Right after I left?

MIO. Fell in with a fisherman's family on the coast and went after the beautiful mackerel fish that swim in the beautiful sea. Family of Greeks—Aristides Marinos was his lovely name. He sang while he fished. Made the pea-green Pacific ring with his bastard Greek chanties. Then I went to Hollywood High School for a while.

CARR. I'll bet that's a seat of learning.

MIO. It's the hind end of all wisdom. They kicked me out after a time.

CARR. For cause?

MIO. Because I had no permanent address, you see. That means nobody's paying school taxes for you, so out you go. [*To MIRIAMNE.*] What's the matter, Kid?

MIRIAMNE. Nothing. [*She looks up at him, and they pause for a moment.*] Nothing.

Winterset

MIO. I'm sorry.

MIRIAMNE. It's all right. [*She withdraws her eyes from his and goes out past him. He turns and looks after her.*]

CARR. Control your chivalry.

MIO. A pretty kid.

CARR. A baby.

MIO. Wait for me.

CARR. Be a long wait? [*Mio steps swiftly out after MIRIAMNE, then returns.*]  
Yeah?

MIO. She's gone.

CARR. Think of that.

MIO. No, but I mean—vanished. Presto—into nothing—prodigioso.

CARR. Damn good thing, if you ask me. The homely ones are bad enough, but the lookers are fatal.

MIO. You exaggerate, Carr.

CARR. I doubt it.

MIO. Well, let her go. This river bank's loaded with typhus rats, too. Might as well die one death as another.

CARR. They say chronic alcoholism is nice but expensive. You can always starve to death.

MIO. Not always. I tried it. After the second day I walked thirty miles to Niagara Falls and made a tour of the plant to get the sample of shredded wheat biscuit on the way out.

CARR. Last time I saw you you couldn't think of anything you wanted to do except curse God and pass out. Still feeling low?

MIO. Not much different. [*He turns away, then comes back.*] Talk about the lost generation, I'm the only one fits that title. When the State executes your father, and your mother dies of grief, and you know damn well he was innocent, and the authorities of your home town politely inform you they'd consider it a favor if you lived somewhere else—that cuts you off from the world—with a meat-axe.

CARR. They asked you to move?

MIO. It came to that.

CARR. God, that was white of them.

MIO. It probably gave them a headache just to see me after all that agitation. They knew as well as I did my father never staged a holdup. Anyway, I've got a new interest in life now.

CARR. Yes—I saw her.

MIO. I don't mean the skirt.—No, I got wind of something, out west, some college professor investigating the trial and turning up new evidence. Couldn't find anything he'd written out there, so I beat it east and arrived on this blessed island just in time to find the bums holing up in the public library for the winter. I know now what the unemployed have been doing since the depression started. They've been catching up on their reading in the main reference room. Man, what a stench! Maybe I stank, too, but a hobo has the stench of ten because his shoes are poor.

CARR. Tennyson.

MIO. Right. Jeez, I'm glad we met up again! Never knew anybody else that could track me through the driven snow of Victorian literature.

CARR. Now you're cribbing from some half-forgotten criticism of Ben Jonson's Roman plagiarisms.

MIO. Where did you get your education, sap?

CARR. Not in the public library, sap. My father kept a news-stand.

MIO. Well, you're right again. [*There is a faint rumble of thunder.*] What's that? Winter thunder?

CARR. Or Mister God, beating on His little tocsin. Maybe announcing the advent of a new social order.

MIO. Or maybe it's going to rain coffee and doughnuts.

CARR. Or maybe it's going to rain.

MIO. Seems more likely. [*Lowering his*

## *Coming-of-Age in Our Time*

voice.] Anyhow, I found Professor Hobhouse's discussion of the Romagna case. I think he has something. It occurred to me I might follow it up by doing a little sleuthing on my own account.

CARR. Yes?

MIO. I have done a little. And it leads me to somewhere in that tenement house that backs up against the bridge. That's how I happen to be here.

CARR. They'll never let you get anywhere with it, Mio. I told you that before.

MIO. I know you did.

CARR. The State can't afford to admit it was wrong, you see. Not when there's been that much of a row kicked up over it. So for all practical purposes the State was right and your father robbed the pay roll.

MIO. There's still such a thing as evidence.

CARR. It's something you can buy. In fact, at the moment I don't think of anything you can't buy, including life, honor, virtue, glory, public office, conjugal affection and all kinds of justice, from the traffic court to the immortal nine. Go out and make yourself a pot of money and you can buy all the justice you want. Convictions obtained, convictions averted. Lowest rates in years.

MIO. I know all that.

CARR. Sure.

MIO. This thing didn't happen to you. They've left you your name and whatever place you can take. For my heritage

They've left me one thing only, and that's to be

my father's voice crying up out of the earth

and quicklime where they stuck him. Electrocution

doesn't kill, you know. They eviscerate them with a turn of the knife in the dissecting room.

The blood spurts out. The man was alive. Then into

the lime pit, leave no trace. Make it short shrift

and chemical dissolution. That's what they thought

of the man that was my father. Then my mother—

I tell you these county burials are swift and cheap and run for profit! Out of the house

and into the ground, you wife of a dead dog. Wait,

here's some Romagna spawn left.

Something crawls here—

something they called a son. Why couldn't he die

along with his mother? Well, ease him out of town,

ease him out, boys, and see you're not too gentle.

He might come back. And, by their own living Jesus,

I will go back, and hang the carrion around their necks that made it!

Maybe I can sleep then.

Or even live.

CARR. You have to try it?

MIO. Yes.

Yes. It won't let me alone. I've tried to live and forget it—but I was birthmarked with hot iron

into the entrails. I've got to find out who did it

and make them see it till it scalds their eyes

and make them admit it till their tongues are blistered

with saying how black they lied!

[HERMAN, a gawky shoe salesman, enters from the left.]

HERMAN. Hello. Did you see a couple of girls go this way?

CARR. Couple of girls? Did we see a couple of girls?

MIO. No.

CARR. No. No girls.

[HERMAN hesitates, then goes out right.

LUCIA comes in from the left, trundling his piano. PINY follows him, weeping.]

PINY. They've got no right to do it—

LUCIA. All right, hell what, no matter, I got to put him away, I got to put him away, that's what the hell! [Two STREET URCHINS follow him in.]

PINY. They want everybody on the relief rolls and nobody making a living?

LUCIA. The cops, they do what the big boss say. The big boss, that's the mayor, he says he heard it once too often, the sextette—

PINY. They want graft, that's all. It's a new way to get graft—

LUCIA. Oh, no, no, no! He's a good man, the mayor. He's just don't care for music, that's all.

PINY. Why shouldn't you make a living on the street? The National Biscuit Company ropes off Eighth Avenue—and does the mayor do anything? No, the police hit you over the head if you try to go through!

LUCIA. You got the big dough, you get the pull, fine. No big dough, no pull, what the hell, get off the city property! Tomorrow I start cooking chestnuts . . . [He strokes the piano fondly. The Two GIRLS and HERMAN come back from the right.] She's a good little machine, this baby. Cost plenty—and two new records I only played twice. See this one. [He starts turning the crank, talking while he plays.] Two weeks since they play this one

in a picture house. [A SAILOR wanders in from the left. One of the STREET URCHINS begins suddenly to dance a wild rumba, the others watch.] Good boy—see, it's a lulu—it itches in the feet!

[HERMAN, standing with his girl, tosses the boy a penny. He bows and goes on dancing; the other URCHIN joins him. The SAILOR tosses a coin.]

SAILOR. Go it, Cuba! Go it!

[LUCIA turns the crank, beaming.]

2ND GIRL. Oh, Herman! [She throws her arms round HERMAN and they dance.]

1ST URCHIN. Hey, pipe the professionals!

1ST GIRL. Do your glide, Shirley! Do your glide!

LUCIA. Maybe we can't play in front, maybe we can play behind! [The HOBBO gets up from his nest and comes over to watch. A YOUNG RADICAL wanders in.] Maybe you don't know, folks! Tonight we play good-bye to the piano! Good-bye forever! No more piano on the streets! No more music! No more money for the music-man! Last time, folks! Good-bye to the piano—good-bye forever! [MIRIAMNE comes out the rear door of the apartment and stands watching. The SAILOR goes over to the 1ST GIRL and they dance together.] Maybe you don't know, folks! Tomorrow will be sad as hell, tonight we dance! Tomorrow no more Verdi, no more rumba, no more good time! Tonight we play good-bye to the piano, good-bye forever! [The RADICAL edges up to MIRIAMNE and asks her to dance. She shakes her head and he goes to PINY, who dances with him. The HOBBO begins to do a few lonely curvets on the side above.] Hoy! Hoy! Pick 'em up and take 'em around! Use the head, use the feet! Last time forever! [He begins to sing to the air.]

MIO. Wait for me, will you?

CARR. Now's your chance.

## Coming-of-Age in Our Time

[MIO goes over to MIRIAMNE and holds out a hand, smiling. She stands for a moment uncertain, then dances with him. ESDRAS comes out to watch. JUDGE GAUNT comes in from the left. There is a rumble of thunder.]

LUCIA. Hoy! Hoy! Maybe it rains tonight, maybe it snows tomorrow! Tonight we dance good-bye. [*He sings the air lustily. A POLICEMAN comes in from the left and looks on. TWO OR THREE PEDESTRIANS follow him.*]

POLICEMAN. Hey you! [*LUCIA goes on singing.*] Hey, you!

LUCIA [*still playing*]. What you want?

POLICEMAN. Sign off!

LUCIA. What you mean? I get off the street!

POLICEMAN. Sign off!

LUCIA [*still playing*]. What you mean? [*The POLICEMAN walks over to him. LUCIA stops playing and the DANCERS pause.*]

POLICEMAN. Cut it.

LUCIA. Is this a street?

POLICEMAN. I say cut it out.

[*The HOBO goes back to his nest and sits in it, watching.*]

LUCIA. It's the last time. We dance good-bye to the piano.

POLICEMAN. You'll dance good-bye to something else if I catch you cranking that thing again.

LUCIA. All right.

PINY. I'll bet you don't say that to the National Biscuit Company!

POLICEMAN. Lady, you've been selling apples on my beat for some time now, and I said nothing about it—

PINY. Selling apples is allowed—

POLICEMAN. You watch yourself—[*He takes a short walk around the place and comes upon the HOBO.*] What are you doing here? [*The HOBO opens his mouth,*

*points to it, and shakes his head.*] Oh, you are, are you? [*He comes back to LUCIA.*] So you trundle your so-called musical instrument to wherever you keep it, and don't let me hear it again.

[*The RADICAL leaps on the base of the rock at right. The 1ST GIRL turns away from the SAILOR toward the 2ND GIRL and HERMAN.*]

SAILOR. Hey, captain, what's the matter with the music?

POLICEMAN. Not a thing, admiral.

SAILOR. Well, we had a little party going here—

POLICEMAN. I'll say you did.

2ND GIRL. Please, officer, we want to dance.

POLICEMAN. Go ahead. Dance.

2ND GIRL. But we want music!

POLICEMAN [*turning to go*]. Sorry. Can't help you.

RADICAL. And there you see it, the perfect example of capitalistic oppression! In a land where music should be free as air and the arts should be encouraged, a uniformed minion of the rich, a guardian myrmidon of the Park Avenue pleasure hunters, steps in and puts a limit on the innocent enjoyments of the poor! We don't go to theaters! Why not? We can't afford it! We don't go to night clubs, where women dance naked and the music drips from saxophones and leaks out of Rudy Vallee—we can't afford that either!—But we might at least dance on the river bank to the strains of a barrel organ—! [*GARTH comes out of the apartment and listens.*]

POLICEMAN. It's against the law!

RADICAL. What law? I challenge you to tell me what law of God or man—what ordinance—is violated by this spontaneous diversion? None! I say none! An official

whim of the masters who should be our servants!—

POLICEMAN. Get down! Get down and shut up!

RADICAL. By what law, by what ordinance do you order me to be quiet?

POLICEMAN. Speaking without a flag. You know it.

RADICAL [*pulling out a small American flag*]. There's my flag! There's the flag of this United States which used to guarantee the rights of man—the rights of man now violated by every statute of the commonweal—

POLICEMAN. Don't try to pull tricks on me! I've seen you before! You're not making any speech, and you're climbing down—

GAUNT [*who has come quietly forward*]. One moment, officer. There is some difference of opinion even on the bench as to the elasticity of police power when applied in minor emergencies to preserve civil order. But the weight of authority would certainly favor the defendant in any equitable court, and he would be upheld in his demand to be heard.

POLICEMAN. Who are you?

GAUNT. Sir, I am not accustomed to answer that question.

POLICEMAN. I don't know you.

GAUNT. I am a judge of some standing, not in your city but in another with similar statutes. You are aware, of course, that the Bill of Rights is not to be set aside lightly by the officers of any municipality—

POLICEMAN [*looking over GAUNT's somewhat bedraggled costume*]. Maybe they understand you better in the town you come from, but I don't get your drift.—[*To the RADICAL.*] I don't want any trouble, but if you ask for it you'll get plenty. Get down!

RADICAL. I'm not asking for trouble, but I'm staying right here. [*The POLICEMAN moves towards him.*]

GAUNT [*taking the POLICEMAN's arm, but shaken off roughly*]. I ask this for yourself, truly, not for the dignity of the law nor the maintenance of precedent. Be gentle with them when their threats are childish—be tolerant while you can—for your least harsh word will return on you in the night—return in a storm of cries!—[*He takes the POLICEMAN's arm again.*] Whatever they may have said or done, let them disperse in peace! It is better that they go softly, lest when they are dead you see their eyes pleading, and their outstretched hands touch you, fingering cold on your heart!—I have been harsher than you. I have sent men down that long corridor into blinding light and blind darkness! [*He suddenly draws himself erect and speaks defiantly.*] And it was well that I did so! I have been an upright judge! They are all liars! Liars!

POLICEMAN [*shaking GAUNT off so that he falls*]. Why, you fool, you're crazy!

GAUNT. Yes, and there are liars on the force! They came to me with their shifty lies! [*He catches at the POLICEMAN, who pushes him away with his foot.*]

POLICEMAN. You think I've got nothing better to do than listen to a crazy fool?

1ST GIRL. Shame, shame!

POLICEMAN. What have I got to be ashamed of? And what's going on here, anyway? Where in hell did you all come from?

RADICAL. Tread on him! That's right! Tread down the poor and the innocent! [*There is a protesting murmur in the crowd.*]

SAILOR [*moving in a little*]. Say, big boy, you don't have to step on the guy.

## *Coming-of-Age in Our Time*

POLICEMAN [*facing them, stepping back*].  
What's the matter with you! I haven't stepped on anybody!

MIO [*at the right, across from the POLICEMAN*].  
Listen now, fellows, give the badge a chance.  
He's doing his job, what he gets paid to do,  
the same as any of you. They're all picked men,  
these metropolitan police, hand picked for loyalty and a fine up-standing pair of shoulders on their legs—it's not so easy to represent the law. Think what he does for all of us, stamping out crime!  
Do you want to be robbed and murdered in your beds?

SAILOR. What's eating you?

RADICAL. He must be a capitalist.

MIO. They pluck them fresh,  
from Ireland, and a paucity of head-piece is a prime prerequisite. You from Ireland, buddy?

POLICEMAN [*surlily*].  
Where are you from?

MIO. Buddy, I tell you flat  
I wish I was from Ireland, and could boast some Tammany connections. There's only one drawback  
about working on the force. It infects the brain,  
it eats the cerebrum. There've been cases known,  
fine specimens of manhood, too, where autopsies,  
conducted in approved 'scientific fashion, revealed conditions quite incredible in policemen's upper layers. In some, a trace,  
in others, when they've swung a stick too long,  
there was nothing there!—but nothing!

Oh, my friends,  
this fine athletic figure of a man that stands so grim before us, what will they find  
when they saw his skull for the last inspection?  
I fear me a little puffball dust will blow away  
rejoining earth, our mother—and this same dust,  
this smoke, this ash on the wind, will represent  
all he had left to think with!

THE HOBO. Hooray!

[*The POLICEMAN turns on his heel and looks hard at the HOBO, who slinks away.*]

POLICEMAN. Oh, yeah?

MIO. My theme  
gives ears to the deaf and voice to the dumb! But now  
forgive me if I say you were most unkind in troubling the officer. He's a simple man of simple tastes, and easily confused when faced with complex issues. He may reflect

on returning home, that is, so far as he is capable of reflection, and conclude that he was kidded out of his uniform pants,  
and in his fury when this dawns on him may smack his wife down!

POLICEMAN. That'll be about enough from you, too, professor!

MIO. May I say that I think you have managed this whole situation rather badly, from the beginning?—

POLICEMAN. You may not!

[*TROCK slips in from the background. The TWO YOUNG MEN IN SERGE come with him.*]

MIO. Oh, but your pardon, sir! It's apparent to the least competent among us

that you should have gone about your task more subtly—the glove of velvet, the hand of iron, and all that sort of thing—

POLICEMAN. Shut that hole in your face!

MIO. Sir, for that remark I shall be satisfied with nothing less than an unconditional apology! I have an old score to settle with policemen, brother, because they're fools and fat-heads, and you're one of the most fatuous fat-heads that ever walked his feet flat collecting graft! Tell that to your sergeant back in the booby-hatch.

POLICEMAN. Oh, you want an apology, do you? You'll get an apology out of the other side of your mouth! [*He steps toward MIO. CARR suddenly stands in his path.*] Get out of my way! [*He pauses and looks round him; the crowd looks less and less friendly. He lays a hand on his gun and backs to a position where there is nobody behind him.*] Get out of here, all of you! Get out! What are you trying to do—start a riot?

MIO. There now, that's better! That's in the best police tradition. Incite a riot yourself and then accuse the crowd.

POLICEMAN. It won't be pleasant if I decide to let somebody have it! Get out! [*The onlookers begin to melt away. The*

*SAILOR goes out left with the GIRLS and HERMAN. CARR and MIO go out right, CARR whistling "The Star Spangled Banner." The HOBBO follows them. The RADICAL walks past with his head in the air. PINY and LUCIA leave the piano where it stands and slip away to the left. At the end the POLICEMAN is left standing in the center, the JUDGE near him. ESDRAS stands in the doorway. MIRIAMNE is left sitting half in shadow and unseen by ESDRAS.*]

GAUNT [*to the POLICEMAN*]. Yes, but should a man die, should it be necessary that one man die for the good of many, make not yourself the instrument of death, lest you sleep to wake sobbing! Nay, it avails nothing that you are the law—this delicate ganglion that is the brain, it will not bear these things—!

[*The POLICEMAN gives the JUDGE the once-over, shrugs, decides to leave him there and starts out left. GARTH goes to his father—a fine sleet begins to fall through the street lights. TROCK is still visible.*]

GARTH. Get him in here, quick.

ESDRAS. Who, son?

GARTH. The Judge, damn him!

ESDRAS. Is it Judge Gaunt?

GARTH. Who did you think it was? He's crazy as a bedbug and telling the world. Get him inside! [*He looks round.*]

ESDRAS [*going up to GAUNT*]. Will you come in, sir?

GAUNT. You will understand, sir. We old men know how softly we must proceed with these things.

ESDRAS. Yes, surely, sir.

GAUNT. It was always my practice—always. They will tell you that of me where I am known. Yet even I am not free of regret—even I. Would you believe it?

ESDRAS. I believe we are none of us free of regret.

GAUNT. None of us? I would it were true. I would I thought it were true.

ESDRAS. Shall we go in, sir? This is sleet that's falling.

GAUNT. Yes. Let us go in.

[*ESDRAS, GAUNT and GARTH enter the basement and shut the door. TROCK goes out with his men. After a pause MIO comes back from the right, alone. He*



## Coming-of-Age in Our Time

*stands at a little distance from MIRIAMNE.]*

MIO. Looks like rain. [*She is silent.*]

You live around here? [*She nods gravely.*] I guess

you thought I meant it—about waiting here to meet me. [*She nods again.*]

I'd forgotten about it till I got that winter across the face. You'd better go inside.

I'm not your kind. I'm nobody's kind but my own.

I'm waiting for this to blow over.

[*She rises.*]

I lied. I meant it—

I meant it when I said it—but there's too much black

whirling inside me—for any girl to know. So go on in. You're somebody's angel child and they're waiting for you.

MIRIAMNE. Yes. I'll go. [*She turns.*]

MIO. And tell them

when you get inside where it's warm,

And you love each other,

and mother comes to kiss her darling, tell them

to hang on to it while they can, believe while they can

it's a warm safe world, and Jesus finds his lambs

and carries them in his bosom.—I've seen some lambs

that Jesus missed. If they ever want the truth

tell them that nothing's guaranteed in this climate

except it gets cold in winter, nor on this earth

except you die sometime.

[*He turns away.*]

MIRIAMNE. I have no mother.

And my people are Jews.

MIO. Then you know something about it.

MIRIAMNE. Yes.

MIO. Do you have enough to eat?

MIRIAMNE. Not always.

MIO. What do you believe in?

MIRIAMNE. Nothing.

MIO. Why?

MIRIAMNE. How can one?

MIO. It's easy if you're a fool. You see the words

in books. Honor, it says there, chivalry, freedom,

heroism, enduring love—and these

are words on paper. It's something to have them there.

You'll get them nowhere else.

MIRIAMNE. What hurts you?

MIO. Just that.

You'll get them nowhere else.

MIRIAMNE. Why should you want them?

MIO. I'm alone, that's why. You see those lights,

along the river, cutting across the rain—? those are the hearths of Brooklyn, and up

this way

the love-nests of Manhattan—they turn their points

like knives against me—outcast of the world,

snake in the streets.—I don't want a hand-out.

I sleep and eat.

MIRIAMNE. Do you want me to go with you?

MIO. Where?

MIRIAMNE. Where you go.

[*A pause. He goes nearer to her.*]

MIO. Why, you god-damned little fool—what made you say that?

MIRIAMNE. I don't know.

MIO. If you have a home stay in it. I ask for nothing. I've schooled myself

to ask for nothing, and take what I can get, and get along. If I fell for you, that's my

look-out,

and I'll starve it down.

*Winterset*

MIRIAMNE. Wherever you go, I'd go.

MIO. What do you know about loving?  
How could you know?

Have you ever had a man?

MIRIAMNE [*after a slight pause*]. No.

But I know.

Tell me your name.

MIO. Mio. What's yours?

MIRIAMNE. Miriamne.

MIO. There's no such name.

MIRIAMNE. But there's no such name as  
Mio!

M.I.O. It's no name.

MIO. It's for Bartolomeo.

MIRIAMNE. My mother's name was  
Miriam,  
so they called me Miriamne.

MIO. Meaning little Miriam?

MIRIAMNE. Yes.

MIO. So now little Miriamne will go in  
and take up quietly where she dropped  
them all

her small housewifely cares.—When I first  
saw you,

not a half-hour ago, I heard myself saying,  
this is the face that launches ships for  
me—

and if I owned a dream—yes, half a  
dream—

we'd share it. But I have no dream. This  
earth

came tumbling down from chaos, fire and  
rock,

and bred up worms, blind worms that  
sting each other

here in the dark. These blind worms of  
the earth

took out my father—and killed him, and  
set a sign

on me—the heir of the serpent—and he  
was a man

such as men might be if the gods were  
men—

but they killed him—

as they'll kill all others like him  
till the sun sools down to the stabler mole-  
cules,

yes, till men spin their tent-worm webs to  
the stars

and what they think is done, even in the  
thinking,

and they are the gods, and immortal, and  
constellations

turn for them all like mill wheels—still as  
they are

they will be, worms and blind. Enduring  
love,

oh gods and worms, what mockery!—And  
yet

I have blood enough in my veins. It goes  
like music,

singing, because you're here. My body  
turns

as if you were the sun, and warm. This  
men called love

in happier times, before the Freudians  
taught us

to blame it on the glands. Only go in  
before you breathe too much of my at-  
mosphere

and catch death from me.

MIRIAMNE. I will take my hands  
and weave them to a little house, and there  
you shall keep a dream—

MIO. God knows I could use a dream  
and even a house.

MIRIAMNE. You're laughing at me; Mio!

MIO. The worms are laughing.

I tell you there's death about me  
and you're a child! And I'm alone and  
half mad

with hate and longing. I shall let you love  
me

and love you in return, and then, why  
then

God knows what happens!

## *Coming-of-Age in Our Time*

MIRIAMNE. Something most unpleasant?

MIO. Love in a box car—love among the children.

I've seen too much of it. Are we to live in this same house you make with your two hands mystically, out of air?

MIRIAMNE. No roof, no mortgage! Well, I shall marry a baker out in Flat-bush, it gives hot bread in the morning! Oh, Mio, Mio, in all the unwanted places and waste lands that roll up into the darkness out of sun and into sun out of dark, there should be one empty for you and me.

MIO. No.

MIRIAMNE. Then go now and leave me. I'm only a girl you saw in the tenements, and there's been nothing said.

MIO. Miriamne.

[*She takes a step toward him.*]

MIRIAMNE. Yes. [*He kisses her lips lightly.*]

MIO. Why, girl, the transfiguration on the mount was nothing to your face. It lights from within—a white chalice holding fire, a flower in flame, this is your face.

MIRIAMNE. And you shall drink the flame and never lessen it. And round your head the aureole shall burn that burns there now, forever. This I can give you. And so forever the Freudians are wrong.

MIO. They're well-forgotten at any rate.

MIRIAMNE. Why did you speak to me when you first saw me?

MIO. I knew then.

MIRIAMNE. And I came back because I must see you again. And we danced together and my heart hurt me. Never, never, never, though they should bind me down and tear out my eyes, would I ever hurt you now. Take me with you, Mio, let them look for us, whoever there is to look, but we'll be away.

[*Mio turns away toward the tenement.*]

MIO. When I was four years old we climbed through an iron gate, my mother and I, to see my father in prison. He stood in the death-cell and put his hand through the bars and said, My Mio, I have only this to leave you, that I love you, and will love you after I die. Love me then, Mio, when this hard thing comes on you, that you must live a man despised for your father. That night the guards, walking in flood-lights brighter than high noon, led him between them with his trousers slit and a shaven head for the cathodes. This sleet and rain that I feel cold here on my face and hands will find him under thirteen years of clay in prison ground. Lie still and rest, my father, for I have not forgotten. When I forget may I lie blind as you. No other love, time passing, nor the spaced light-years of suns shall blur your voice, or tempt me from the path that clears your name—

till I have these rats in my grip  
or sleep deep where you sleep.  
[To MIRIAMNE.] I have no house,  
nor home, nor love of life, nor fear of  
death,  
nor care for what I eat, or who I sleep  
with,  
or what color of calcimine the Govern-  
ment  
will wash itself this year or next to lure  
the sheep and feed the wolves. Love some-  
where else,  
and get your children in some other image  
more acceptable to the State! This face  
of mine

is stamped for sewage!

[*She steps back, surmising.*]

MIRIAMNE. Mio—

Mio. My road is cut  
in rock, and leads to one end. If I hurt  
you, I'm sorry.

One gets over hurts.

MIRIAMNE. What was his name—  
your father's name?

Mio. Bartolomeo Romagna.  
I'm not ashamed of it.

MIRIAMNE. Why are you here?

Mio. For the reason  
I've never had a home. Because I'm a cry  
out of a shallow grave, and all roads are  
mine  
that might revenge him!

MIRIAMNE. But Mio—why here—why  
here?

Mio. I can't tell you that.

MIRIAMNE. No—but—there's someone  
lives here—lives not far—and you mean to  
see him—

you mean to ask him—[*She pauses.*]

Mio. Who told you that?

MIRIAMNE. His name  
is Garth—Garth Esdras—

Mio [*after a pause, coming nearer*].  
Who are you, then? You seem

to know a good deal about me.—Were  
you sent  
to say this?

MIRIAMNE. You said there was death  
about you! Yes,  
but nearer than you think! Let it be as  
it is—

let it all be as it is, never see this place  
nor think of it—forget the streets you  
came

when you're away and safe! Go before  
you're seen

or spoken to!

Mio. Will you tell me why?

MIRIAMNE. As I love you

I can't tell you—and I can never see you—

Mio. I walk where I please—

MIRIAMNE. Do you think it's easy for  
me to send you away? [*She steps back  
as if to go.*]

Mio. Where will I find you then  
if I should want to see you?

MIRIAMNE. Never—I tell you  
I'd bring you death! Even now. Listen!

[*SHADOW and TROCK enter between the  
bridge and the tenement house. MIRI-  
AMNE pulls Mio back into the shadow  
of the rock to avoid being seen.*]

TROCK. Why, fine.

SHADOW. You watch it now—just for the  
record, Trock—  
you're going to thank me for staying away  
from it

and keeping you out. I've seen men get  
that way,

thinking they had to plug a couple of  
guys

and then a few more to cover it up, and  
then

maybe a dozen more. You can't own all  
and territory adjacent, and you can't  
slough all the witnesses, because every  
man

you put away has friends—

## Coming-of-Age in Our Time

TROCK. I said all right.  
I said fine.

SHADOW. They're going to find this judge,  
and if they find him dead it's just too bad,  
and I don't want to know anything about it—

and you don't either.

TROCK. You all through?

SHADOW. Why sure.

TROCK. All right.

We're through, too, you know.

SHADOW. Yeah? [*He becomes wary.*]

TROCK. Yeah, we're through.

SHADOW. I've heard that said before, and afterwards  
somebody died.

[TROCK is silent.] Is that what you mean?

TROCK. You can go.

I don't want to see you.

SHADOW. Sure, I'll go.

Maybe you won't mind if I just find out  
what you've got on you. Before I turn my  
back

I'd like to know.

[*Silently and expertly he touches TROCK's pockets, extracting a gun.*]

Not that I'd distrust you,

but you know how it is. [*He pockets the gun.*]

So long, Trock.

TROCK. So long.

SHADOW. I won't talk.

You can be sure of that.

TROCK. I know you won't.

[SHADOW turns and goes out right, past the rock and along the bank. As he goes the TWO YOUNG MEN IN BLUE SERGE enter from the left and walk slowly after SHADOW. They look toward TROCK as they enter and he motions with his thumb in the direction taken by SHADOW. They follow SHADOW out without haste. TROCK

*watches them disappear, then slips out the way he came. MIO comes a step forward, looking after the two men. Two or three shots are heard, then silence. MIO starts to run after SHADOW.]*

MIRIAMNE. Mio!

MIO. What do you know about this?

MIRIAMNE. The other way,

Mio—quick!

[CARR slips in from the right, in haste.]

CARR. Look, somebody's just been shot. He fell in the river. The guys that did the shooting ran up the bank.

MIO. Come on.

[MIO and CARR run out right. MIRIAMNE watches uncertainly, then slowly turns and walks to the rear door of the tenement. She stands there a moment, looking after MIO, then goes in, closing the door. CARR and MIO return.]

CARR. There's a rip tide past the point. You'd never find him.

MIO. No.

CARR. You know a man really ought to carry insurance living around here.—God, it's easy, putting a fellow away. I never saw it done before.

MIO [*looking at the place where MIRIAMNE stood*]. They have it all worked out.

CARR. What are you doing now?

MIO. I have a little business to transact in this neighborhood.

CARR. You'd better forget it.

MIO. No.

CARR. Need any help?

MIO. Well, if I did I'd ask you first. But I don't see how it would do any good. So you keep out of it and take care of yourself.

CARR. So long, then.

MIO. So long, Carr.

## Winterset

CARR [*looking down-stream*]. He was drifting face up. Must be halfway to the island the way the tide runs. [*He shivers.*] God, it's cold here. Well—

[*He goes out to the left. MIO sits on the edge of the rock. LUCIA comes stealthily back from between the bridge and the tenement, goes to the street-piano*

*and wheels it away. PINY comes in. They take a look at MIO, but say nothing. LUCIA goes into his shelter and PINY into hers. MIO rises, looks up at the tenement, and goes out to the left.*]

CURTAIN

## ACT II

[*The basement as in Scene Two of Act I. The same evening. ESDRAS sits at the table reading, MIRIAMNE is seated at the left, listening and intent. The door of the inner room is half open and GARTH's violin is heard. He is playing the theme from the third movement of Beethoven's Archduke Trio. ESDRAS looks up.*]

ESDRAS. I remember when I came to the end of all the Talmud said, and the commentaries, then I was fifty years old—and it was time to ask what I had learned. I asked this question and gave myself the answer. In all the Talmud there was nothing to find but the names of things, set down that we might call them by those names and walk without fear among things known. Since then I have had twenty years to read on and on and end with Ecclesiastes. Names of names, evanid days, evanid nights and days and words that shift their meaning. Space is time, that which was is now—the men of tomorrow live, and this is their yesterday. All things

that were and are and will be, have their being then and now and to come. If this means little when you are young, remember it. It will return

to mean more when you are old.

MIRIAMNE. I'm sorry—I was listening for something.

ESDRAS. It doesn't matter. It's a useless wisdom. It's all I have, but useless. It may be there is no time, but we grow old. Do you know his name?

MIRIAMNE. Whose name?

ESDRAS. Why, when we're young and listen for a step the step should have a name—

[*MIRIAMNE, not hearing, rises and goes to the window. GARTH enters from within, carrying his violin and carefully closing the door.*]

GARTH [*as ESDRAS looks at him*]. Asleep.

ESDRAS. He may sleep on through the whole night—then in the morning we can let them know.

GARTH. We'd be wiser to say nothing—let him find his own way back.

ESDRAS. How did he come here?

GARTH. He's not too crazy for that. If he wakes again we'll keep him quiet and shift him off tomorrow.

Somebody'd pick him up.

## Coming-of-Age in Our Time

ESDRAS. How have I come  
to this sunken end of a street, at a life's  
end—?

GARTH. It was cheaper here—not to be  
transcendental—

So—we say nothing—?

ESDRAS. Nothing.

MIRIAMNE. Garth, there's no place  
in this whole city—not one—  
where you would be safer  
than here—tonight—or tomorrow.

GARTH [*bitterly*]. Well, that may be.  
What of it?

MIRIAMNE. If you slipped away and took  
a place somewhere where Trock couldn't  
find you—

GARTH. Yes—  
using what for money? and why do you  
think

I've sat here so far—because I love my home  
so much? No, but if I stepped round the  
corner  
it'd be my last corner and my last step.

MIRIAMNE. And yet—  
if you're here—they'll find you here—  
Trock will come again—  
and there's worse to follow—

GARTH. Do you want to get me killed?

MIRIAMNE. No.

GARTH. There's no way out of it. We'll  
wait  
and take what they send us.

ESDRAS. Hush! You'll wake him.

GARTH. I've done it.  
I hear him stirring now.

[*They wait quietly.* JUDGE GAUNT *opens  
the door and enters.*]

GAUNT [*in the doorway*]. I beg your  
pardon—  
no, no, be seated—keep your place—I've  
made  
your evening difficult enough, I fear;  
and I must thank you doubly for your  
kindness,  
for I've been ill—I know it.

ESDRAS. You're better, sir?

GAUNT. Quite recovered, thank you.

Able, I hope,

to manage nicely now. You'll be rewarded  
for your hospitality—though at this moment  
[*He smiles.*] I'm low in funds.

[*He inspects his billfold.*] Sir, my embar-  
rassment

is great indeed—and more than monetary,  
for I must own my recollection's vague  
of how I came here—how we came to-  
gether—

and what we may have said. My name is  
Gaunt,

Judge Gaunt, a name long known in the  
criminal courts,

and not unhonored there.

ESDRAS. My name is Esdras—  
and this is Garth, my son. And Miriamne,  
the daughter of my old age.

GAUNT. I'm glad to meet you.

Esdras. Garth Esdras.

[*He passes a hand over his eyes.*]

It's not a usual name.

Of late it's been connected with a case—  
a case I knew. But this is hardly the man.  
Though it's not a usual name.

[*They are silent.*] Sir, how I came here,  
as I have said, I don't well know. Such  
things

are sometimes not quite accident.

ESDRAS. We found you  
outside our door and brought you in.

GAUNT. The brain  
can be overworked, and weary, even when  
the man

would swear to his good health. Sir, on  
my word

I don't know why I came here, nor how,  
nor when,

nor what would explain it. Shall we say  
the machine

begins to wear? I felt no twinge of it.—

You will imagine how much more than  
galling

I feel it, to ask my way home—and where I am—  
but I do ask you that.

ESDRAS. This is New York City—  
or part of it.

GAUNT. Not the best part, I presume?  
[*He smiles grimly.*] No, not the best.

ESDRAS. Not typical, no.

GAUNT. And you—[*To GARTH.*]  
you are Garth Esdras?

GARTH. That's my name.

GAUNT. Well, sir, [*To ESDRAS.*]  
I shall lie under the deepest obligation  
if you will set an old man on his path,  
for I lack the homing instinct, if the truth  
were known. North, east and south mean  
nothing to me  
here in this room.

ESDRAS. I can put you in your way.

GARTH. Only you'd be wiser to wait a  
while—  
if I'm any judge.—

GAUNT. It happens I'm the judge—  
[*With stiff humor.*]  
in more ways than one. You'll forgive me  
if I say

I find this place and my predicament  
somewhat distasteful.

[*He looks round him.*]

GARTH. I don't doubt you do;  
but you're better off here.

GAUNT. Nor will you find it wise  
to cross my word as lightly as you seem  
inclined to do. You've seen me ill and  
shaken—

and you presume on that.

GARTH. Have it your way.

GAUNT. Doubtless what information is  
required  
we'll find nearby.

ESDRAS. Yes, sir—the terminal,—  
if you could walk so far.

GAUNT. I've done some walking—  
to look at my shoes.

[*He looks down, then puts out a hand to steady himself.*] That—that was why  
I came—

never mind—it was there—and it's gone.

[*To GARTH.*] Professor Hobhouse—  
that's the name—he wrote some trash  
about you

and printed it in a broadside.

—Since I'm here I can tell you  
it's a pure fabrication—lacking facts  
and legal import. Senseless and impudent,  
written with bias—with malicious intent  
to undermine the public confidence  
in justice and the courts. I knew it then—  
all he brings out about this testimony  
you might have given. It's true I could  
have called you,

but the case was clear—Romagna was  
known guilty,  
and there was nothing to add. If I've en-  
dured

some hours of torture over their attacks  
upon my probity—and in this torture  
have wandered from my place, wandered  
perhaps

in mind and body—and found my way to  
face you—

why, yes, it is so—I know it—I beg of  
you

say nothing. It's not easy to give up  
a fair name after a full half century  
of service to a state. It may well rock  
the surest reason. Therefore I ask of you  
say nothing of this visit.

GARTH. I'll say nothing.

ESDRAS. Nor any of us.

GAUNT. Why, no—for you'd lose, too.  
You'd have nothing to gain.

ESDRAS. Indeed we know it.

GAUNT. I'll remember you kindly. When  
I've returned,

there may be some mystery made of where  
I was—

we'll leave it a mystery?

GARTH. Anything you say.



## Coming-of-Age in Our Time

GAUNT. Why, now I go with much more peace of mind—if I can call you friends.

ESDRAS. We shall be grateful for silence on your part, Your Honor.

GAUNT. Sir—  
if there were any just end to be served by speaking out, I'd speak! There is none.  
No—

bear that in mind!

ESDRAS. We will, Your Honor.

GAUNT. Then—  
I'm in some haste. If you can be my guide, we'll set out now.

ESDRAS. Yes, surely.

[*There is a knock at the door. The four look at each other with some apprehension. MIRIAMNE rises.*]

I'll answer it.

MIRIAMNE. Yes.

[*She goes into the inner room and closes the door. ESDRAS goes to the outer door. The knock is repeated. He opens the door. MIO is there.*]

ESDRAS. Yes, sir.

MIO. May I come in?

ESDRAS. Will you state your business, sir?  
It's late—and I'm not at liberty—

MIO. Why, I might say  
that I was trying to earn my tuition fees by peddling magazines. I could say that,  
or collecting old newspapers—paying  
cash—

highest rates—no questions asked—  
[*He looks round sharply.*]

GARTH. We've nothing to sell.  
What do you want?

MIO. Your pardon, gentlemen.  
My business is not of an ordinary kind,  
and I felt the need of this slight introduction  
while I might get my bearings. Your name  
is Esdras,  
or they told me so outside.

GARTH. What do you want?

MIO. Is that the name?

GARTH. Yes.

MIO. I'll be quick and brief.

I'm the son of a man who died many  
years ago  
for a pay roll robbery in New England.  
You

should be Garth Esdras, by what I've  
heard. You have  
some knowledge of the crime, if one can  
believe

what he reads in the public prints, and  
it might be  
that your testimony, if given, would clear  
my father  
of any share in the murder. You may not  
care

whether he was guilty or not. You may  
not know.

But I do care—and care deeply, and I've  
come  
to ask you face to face.

GARTH. To ask me what?

MIO. What do you know of it?

ESDRAS. This man Romagna,  
did he have a son?

MIO. Yes, sir, this man Romagna,  
as you choose to call him, had a son, and I  
am that son, and proud.

ESDRAS. Forgive me.

MIO. Had you known him,  
and heard him speak, you'd know why  
I'm proud, and why  
he was no malefactor.

ESDRAS. I quite believe you.  
If my son can help he will. But at this  
moment,  
as I told you—could you, I wonder, come  
tomorrow,  
at your own hour?

MIO. Yes.

ESDRAS. By coincidence

we too of late have had this thing in mind—

there have been comments printed, and much discussion

which we could hardly avoid.

Mio. Could you tell me then in a word?—What you know—is it for him or against him?—that's all I need.

ESDRAS. My son knows nothing.

GARTH. No.

The picture-papers lash themselves to a fury

over any rumor—make them up when they're short

of bedroom slops.—This is what happened. I

had known a few members of a gang one time

up there—and after the murder they picked me up

because I looked like someone that was seen

in what they called the murder car. They held me

a little while, but they couldn't identify me

for the most excellent reason I wasn't there

when the thing occurred. A dozen years later now

a professor comes across this, and sees red and asks why I wasn't called on as a witness

and yips so loud they syndicate his picture in all the rotos. That's all I know about it. I wish I could tell you more.

ESDRAS. Let me say too that I have read some words your father said,

and you were a son fortunate in your father, whatever the verdict of the world.

Mio. There are few who think so, but it's true, and I thank you. Then—

that's the whole story?

GARTH. All I know of it.

Mio. They cover their tracks well, the inner ring that distributes murder. I came three thousand miles to this dead end.

ESDRAS. If he was innocent and you know him so, believe it, and let the others believe as they like.

Mio. Will you tell me how a man's to live, and face his life, if he can't believe that truth's like a fire,

and will burn through and be seen though it takes all the years there are?

While I stand up and have breath in my lungs

I shall be one flame of that fire; it's all the life I have.

ESDRAS. Then you must live so. One must live as he can.

Mio. It's the only way of life my father left me.

ESDRAS. Yes? Yet it's true the ground we walk on is impacted down and hard with blood and bones of those who died

unjustly. There's not one title to land or life,

even your own, but was built on rape and murder,

back a few years. It would take a fire indeed

to burn out all this terror.

Mio. Then let it burn down, all of it!

ESDRAS. We ask a great deal of the world at first—then less—and then less.

We ask for truth

### *Coming-of-Age in Our Time*

and justice. But this truth's a thing unknown  
in the lightest, smallest matter—and as for justice,  
who has once seen it done? You loved your father,  
and I could have loved him, for every word he spoke  
in his trial was sweet and tolerant, but the weight  
of what men are and have, rests heavy on the graves of those who lost. They'll not rise again,  
and their causes lie there with them.

GAUNT. If you mean to say that Bartolomeo Romagna was innocent, you are wrong. He was guilty. There may have been injustice from time to time, by regrettable chance, in our courts, but not in that case, I assure you.

MIO. Oh, you assure me!  
You lie in your scrag teeth, whoever you are!  
My father was murdered!

GAUNT. Romagna was found guilty by all due process of law, and given his chance to prove his innocence.

MIO. What chance? When a court panders to mob hysterics, and the jury comes in loaded to soak an anarchist and a foreigner, it may be due process of law but it's also murder!

GAUNT. He should have thought of that before he spilled blood.

MIO. He?

GAUNT. Sir, I know too well that he was guilty.

MIO. Who are you? How do you know? I've searched the records through, the trial and what

came after, and in all that million words I found not one unbiased argument to fix the crime on him.

GAUNT. And you yourself, were you unprejudiced?

MIO. Who are you?

ESDRAS. Sir, this gentleman is here, as you are here, to ask my son, as you have asked, what ground there might be for this talk of, new evidence in your father's case. We gave him the same answer we've given you.

MIO. I'm sorry. I'd supposed his cause forgotten except by myself. There's still

a defense committee then?

GAUNT. There may be. I am not connected with it.

ESDRAS. He is my guest, and asks to remain unknown.

MIO [*after a pause, looking at GAUNT*]. The judge at the trial was younger, but he had your face. Can it be that you're the man?—Yes—Yes.—The jury charge—

I sat there as a child and heard your voice, and watched that Brahminical mouth. I knew even then

you meant no good to him. And now you're here

to winnow out truth and justice—the fountain-head

of the lies that slew him! Are you Judge Gaunt?

GAUNT. I am.

MIO. Then tell me what damnation to what inferno

would fit the toad that sat in robes and lied

when he gave the charge, and knew he  
 lied! Judge that,  
 and then go to your place in that hell!

GAUNT. I know and have known  
 what bitterness can rise against a court  
 when it must say, putting aside all weak-  
 ness,

that a man's to die. I can forgive you that,  
 for you are your father's son, and you  
 think of him

as a son thinks of his father. Certain laws  
 seem cruel in their operation; it's neces-  
 sary

that we be cruel to uphold them. This  
 cruelty

is kindness to those I serve.

Mio. I don't doubt that.

I know who it is you serve.

GAUNT. Would I have chosen  
 to rack myself with other men's despairs,  
 stop my ears, harden my heart, and listen  
 only

to the voice of law and light, if I had  
 hoped

some private gain for serving? In all my  
 years

on the bench of a long-established com-  
 monwealth

not once has my decision been in question  
 save in this case. Not once before or since.

For hope of heaven or place on earth, or  
 power

or gold, no man has had my voice, nor  
 will

while I still keep the trust that's laid on  
 me

to sentence and define.

Mio. Then why are you here?

GAUNT. My record's clean. I've kept it  
 so. But suppose  
 with the best intent, among the myriad  
 tongues

that come to testify, I had missed my way

and followed a perjured tale to a lethal  
 end

till a man was forsworn to death? Could  
 I rest or sleep

while there was doubt of this,  
 even while there was question in a lay-  
 man's mind?

For always, night and day,  
 there lies on my brain like a weight, the  
 admonition:

see truly, let nothing sway you; among all  
 functions

there's but one godlike, to judge. Then  
 see to it

you judge as a god would judge, with  
 clarity,

with truth, with what mercy is found con-  
 sonant

with order and law. Without law men are  
 beasts,

and it's a judge's task to lift and hold  
 them

above themselves. Let a judge be once mis-  
 taken

or step aside for a friend, and a gap is  
 made

in the dykes that hold back anarchy and  
 chaos,

and leave men bond but free.

Mio. Then the gap's been made,  
 and you made it.

GAUNT. I feared that too. May you be a  
 judge

sometime, and know in what fear,  
 through what nights long

in fear, I scanned and verified and com-  
 pared

the transcripts of the trial.

Mio. Without prejudice,  
 no doubt. It was never in your mind to  
 prove

that you'd been right.

GAUNT. And conscious of that, too—

*Coming-of-Age in Our Time*

that that might be my purpose—watchful  
of that,  
and jealous as his own lawyer of the rights  
that should hedge the defendant!  
And still I found no error,  
shook not one staple of the bolts that  
linked  
the doer to the deed! Still following on  
from step to step, I watched all modern  
comment,  
and saw it centered finally on one fact—  
Garth Esdras was not called. This is Garth  
Esdras,  
and you have heard him. Would his depo-  
sition  
have justified a new trial?

Mio. No. It would not.

GAUNT. And there I come, myself. If the  
man were still  
in his cell, and waiting, I'd have no faint  
excuse  
for another hearing.

Mio. I've told you that I read  
the trial from beginning to end. Every  
word you spoke  
was balanced carefully to keep the letter  
of the law and still convict—convict, by  
Christ,  
if it tore the seven veils! You stand here  
now  
running cascades of casuistry, to prove  
to yourself and me that no judge of rank  
and breeding  
could burn a man out of hate! But that's  
what you did  
under all your varnish!

GAUNT. I've sought for evidence,  
and you have sought. Have you found it?  
Can you cite  
one fresh word in defence?

Mio. The trial itself  
was shot full of legerdemain, prearranged  
to lead  
the jury astray—

GAUNT. Could you prove that?

Mio. Yes!

GAUNT. And if  
the jury were led astray, remember it's  
the jury, by our Anglo-Saxon custom,  
that finds for guilt or innocence. The  
judge  
is powerless in that matter.

Mio. Not you! Your charge  
misled the jury more than the evidence,  
accepted every biased meaning, distilled  
the poison for them!

GAUNT. But if that were so  
I'd be the first, I swear it, to step down  
among all men, and hold out both my  
hands

for manacles—yes, publish it in the streets,  
that all I've held most sacred was defiled  
by my own act. A judge's brain becomes  
a delicate instrument to weigh men's lives  
for good and ill—too delicate to bear  
much tampering. If he should push aside  
the weights and throw the beam, and say,  
this once

the man is guilty, and I will have it so  
though his mouth cry out from the  
ground,  
and all the world  
revoke my word, he'd have a short way  
to go

to madness. I think you'd find him in the  
squares,  
stopping the passers-by with arguments,—  
see, I was right, the man was guilty  
there—

this was brought in against him, this—  
and this—  
and I was left no choice! It's no light thing  
when a long life's been dedicate to one  
end

to wrench the mind awry!

Mio. By your own thesis  
you should be mad, and no doubt you  
are.

GAUNT. But my madness  
is only this—that I would fain look back  
on a life well spent—without one stain—  
one breath  
of stain to flaw the glass—not in men's  
minds  
nor in my own. I take my God as witness  
I meant to earn that clearness, and be-  
lieve  
that I have earned it. Yet my name is  
clouded  
with the blackest, fiercest scandal of our  
age  
that's touched a judge. What I can do to  
wipe  
that smutch from my fame I will. I think  
you know  
how deeply I've been hated, for no cause  
that I can find there. Can it not be—and  
I ask this  
quite honestly—that the great injustice lies  
on your side and not mine? Time and  
time again  
men have come before me perfect in their  
lives,  
loved by all who knew them, loved at  
home,  
gentle, not vicious, yet caught so ripe red-  
handed  
in some dark violence there was no deny-  
ing  
where the onus lay.

MIO. That was not so with my father!

GAUNT. And yet it seemed so to me. To  
other men  
who sat in judgment on him. Can you be  
sure—  
I ask this in humility—that you,  
who were touched closest by the tragedy,  
may not have lost perspective—may have  
brooded  
day and night on one theme—till your  
eyes are tranced  
and show you one side only?

MIO. I see well enough.

GAUNT. And would that not be part of  
the malady—  
to look quite steadily at the drift of things  
but see there what you wish—not what is  
there—

not what another man to whom the story  
was fresh would say is there?

MIO. You think I'm crazy.  
Is that what you meant to say?

GAUNT. I've seen it happen  
with the best and wisest men. I but ask  
the question.

I can't speak for you. Is it not true wher-  
ever

you walk, through the little town where  
you knew him well,  
or flying from it, inland or by the sea,  
still walking at your side, and sleeping  
only

when you too sleep, a shadow not your  
own  
follows, pleading and holding out its  
hands

to be delivered from shame?

MIO. How you know that  
by God I don't know.

GAUNT. Because one spectre haunted  
you and me—  
and haunts you still, but for me it's laid  
to rest

now that my mind is satisfied. He died  
justly and not by error. [*A pause.*]

MIO [*stepping forward*]. Do you care to  
know  
you've come so near to death it's miracle  
that pulse still beats in your splotchy  
throat?

Do you know  
there's murder in me?

GAUNT. There was murder in your sire,  
and it's to be expected! I say he died  
justly, and he deserved it!

MIO. Yes, you'd like too well

*Coming-of-Age in Our Time*

to have me kill you! That would prove  
your case  
and clear your name, and dip my father's  
name

in stench forever! You'll not get that from  
me!

Go home and die in bed, get it under  
cover,  
your lux-et-lex putrefaction of the right  
thing,

you man that walks like a god!

GAUNT. Have I made you angry  
by coming too near the truth?

MIO. This sets him up,  
this venomous slug, this sets him up in a  
gown,  
deciding who's to walk above the earth  
and who's to lie beneath! And giving reasons!

The cobra giving reasons; I'm a god,  
by Buddha, holy and worshipful my fang,  
and can I sink it in!

[*He pauses, turns as if to go, then sits.*]

This is no good.

This won't help much.

[*The JUDGE and ESDRAS look at each other.*]

GAUNT. We should be going.

ESDRAS. Yes. [*They prepare to go.*]  
I'll lend you my coat.

GAUNT [*looking at it with distaste*].

No, keep it. A little rain  
shouldn't matter to me.

ESDRAS. It freezes as it falls,  
and you've a long way to go.

GAUNT. I'll manage, thank you.

[*GAUNT and ESDRAS go out, ESDRAS obsequious, closing the door.*]

GARTH [*looking at MIO's back*]. Well?

MIO [*not moving*]. Let me sit here a  
moment.

[*GARTH shrugs his shoulders and goes toward the inner door. MIRIAMNE opens it and comes out. GARTH looks at her,*

*then at MIO, then lays his fingers on his lips. She nods. GARTH goes out. MIRIAMNE sits and watches MIO. After a little he turns and sees her.*]

MIO. How did you come here?

MIRIAMNE. I live here.

MIO. Here?

MIRIAMNE. My name is Esdras. Garth is my brother. The walls are thin. I heard what was said.

MIO [*stirring wearily*]. I'm going. This is no place for me.

MIRIAMNE. What place would be better?

MIO. None. Only it's better to go. Just to go.

[*She comes over to him, puts her arm around him and kisses his forehead.*]

MIRIAMNE. MIO.

MIO. What do you want?

Your kisses burn me—and your arms. Don't offer

what I'm never to have! I can have nothing. They say they'll cross the void sometime to the other planets

and men will breathe in that air.

Well, I could breathe there, but not here now. Not on this ball of mud.

I don't want it.

MIRIAMNE. They can take away so little with all their words. For you're a king among them.

I heard you, and loved your voice.

MIO. I thought I'd fallen so low there was no further, and now a pit opens beneath. It was bad enough that he should have died innocent, but if he were guilty—

then what's my life—what have I left to do—?

The son of a felon—and what they spat on me

was earned—and I'm drenched with the stuff.

Here on my hands  
and cheeks, their spittle hanging! I liked  
my hands  
because they were like his. I tell you I've  
lived  
by his innocence, lived to see it flash  
and blind them all—

MIRIAMNE. Never believe them, Mio,  
never. [*She looks toward the inner door.*]

Mio. But it was truth I wanted, truth—  
not the lies you'd tell yourself, or tell a  
woman,  
or a woman tells you! The judge with his  
cobra mouth  
may have spat truth—and I may be mad!  
For me—

your hands are too clean to touch me. I'm  
to have  
the scraps from hotel kitchens—and in-  
stead of love  
those mottled bodies that hitch themselves  
through alleys  
to sell for dimes or nickels. Go, keep your-  
self chaste  
for the baker bridegroom—baker and son  
of a baker,  
let him get his baker's dozen on you!

MIRIAMNE. No—  
say once you love me—say it once; I'll  
never  
ask to hear it twice, nor for any kindness,  
and you shall take all I have!

[*GARTH opens the inner door and comes  
out.*]

GARTH. I interrupt.  
a love scene, I believe. We can do without  
your adolescent mawkishness.  
[*To MIRIAMNE.*] You're a child.  
You'll both remember that.

MIRIAMNE. I've said nothing to harm  
you—  
and will say nothing.

GARTH. You're my sister, though,  
and I take a certain interest in you. Where  
have you two met?

MIRIAMNE. We danced together.

GARTH. Then  
the dance is over, I think.

MIRIAMNE. I've always loved you  
and tried to help you, Garth. And you've  
been kind.

Don't spoil it now.

GARTH. Spoil it how?

MIRIAMNE. Because I love him.  
I didn't know it would happen. We  
danced together.

And the world's all changed. I see you  
through a mist,  
and our father, too. If you brought this to  
nothing

I'd want to die.

GARTH [*to Mio*]. You'd better go.

Mio. Yes, I know.

[*He rises. There is a trembling knock at  
the door. MIRIAMNE goes to it. The  
Hobo is there shivering.*]

Hobo. Miss, could I sleep under the  
pipes tonight, miss?

Could I, please?

MIRIAMNE. I think—not tonight.

Hobo. There won't be any more nights—  
if I don't get warm, miss.

MIRIAMNE. Come in.

[*The Hobo comes in, looks round depre-  
catingly, then goes to a corner beneath  
a huge heating pipe, which he crawls  
under as if he'd been there before.*]

Hobo. Yes, miss, thank you.

GARTH. Must we put up with that?

MIRIAMNE. Father let him sleep there—  
last winter.

GARTH. Yes, God, yes.

Mio. Well, good night.

MIRIAMNE. Where will you go?

Mio. Yes, where? As if it mattered.

GARTH. Oh, sleep here, too.



## Coming-of-Age in Our Time

We'll have a row of you under the pipes.

MIO. No, thanks.

MIRIAMNE. Mio, I've saved a little money. It's only some pennies, but you must take it.  
[*She shakes some coins out of a box into her hand.*]

MIO. No, thanks.

MIRIAMNE. And I love you.  
You've never said you love me.

MIO. Why wouldn't I love you when you're clean and sweet, and I've seen nothing sweet or clean this last ten years? I love you. I leave you that for what good it may do you. It's none to me.

MIRIAMNE. Then kiss me.

MIO [*looking at GARTH*].  
With that scowling over us? No.  
When it rains, some spring on the planet Mercury, where the spring comes often,  
I'll meet you there, let's say. We'll wait for that.

It may be some time till then.

[*The outside door opens and ESDRAS enters with JUDGE GAUNT, then, after a slight interval, TROCK follows. TROCK surveys the interior and its occupants one by one, carefully.*]

TROCK. I wouldn't want to cause you inconvenience, any of you, and especially the Judge.  
I think you know that. You've all got things to do—trains to catch, and so on. But trains can wait.

Hell, nearly anything can wait, you'll find,  
only I can't. I'm the only one that can't because I've got no time. Who's all this here?

Who's that? [*He points to the Hobo.*]

ESDRAS. He's a poor half-wit, sir, that sometimes sleeps there.

TROCK. Come out. I say come out, whoever you are.

[*The Hobo stirs and looks up.*]

Yes, I mean you. Come out.

[*The Hobo emerges.*]

What's your name?

Hobo. They mostly call me Oke.

TROCK. What do you know?

Hobo. No, sir.

TROCK. Where are you from?

Hobo. I got a piece of bread.  
[*He brings it out, trembling.*]

TROCK. Get back in there!

[*The Hobo crawls back into his corner.*]  
Maybe you want to know why I'm doing this.

Well, I've been robbed, that's why—robbed five or six times;  
the police can't find a thing—so I'm out for myself—  
if you want to know.

[*To Mio.*] Who are you?

Mio. Oh, I'm a half-wit,  
came in here by mistake. The difference is

I've got no piece of bread.

TROCK. What's your name?

Mio. My name?

Theophrastus Such. That's respectable.

You'll find it all the way from here to the coast

on the best police blotters.

Only the truth is we're a little touched in the head,

Oke and me. You'd better ask somebody else.

TROCK. Who is he?

ESDRAS. His name's Romagna. He's the son.

TROCK. Then what's he doing here?  
You said you were on the level.

GARTH. He just walked in. On account

of the stuff in the papers. We didn't ask him.

TROCK. God, we are a gathering. Now if we had Shadow we'd be all here, huh? Only I guess we won't see Shadow. No, that's too much to ask.

MIO. Who's Shadow?

TROCK. Now you're putting questions. Shadow was just nobody, you see. He blew away. It might happen to anyone. [*He looks at GARTH.*] Yes, anyone at all.

MIO. Why do you keep your hand in your pocket, friend?

TROCK. Because I'm cold, punk. Because I've been outside and it's cold as the tomb of Christ. [*To GARTH.*] Listen, there's a car waiting up at the street to take the Judge home. We'll take him to the car.

GARTH. That's not necessary.

ESDRAS. No.

TROCK. I say it is, see? You wouldn't want to let the Judge walk, would you? The Judge is going to ride where he's going, with a couple of chauffeurs, and everything done in style. Don't you worry about the Judge. He'll be taken care of. For good.

GARTH. I want no hand in it.

TROCK. Anything happens to me happens to you too, musician.

GARTH. I know that.

TROCK. Keep your mouth out of it then. And you'd better keep the punk here tonight, just for luck. [*He turns toward the door. There is a brilliant lightning flash through the windows, followed slowly by dying thunder. TROCK opens the door. The rain begins to pour in sheets.*] Jesus, somebody tipped it over again! [*A cough racks him.*] Wait till it's over. It takes ten days off me every time I step into it. [*He closes the door.*] Sit down and wait.

[*Lightning flashes again. The thunder is fainter. ESDRAS, GARTH and the JUDGE sit down.*]

GAUNT. We were born too early. Even you who are young are not of the elect. In a hundred years man will put his finger on life itself, and then

he will live as long as he likes. For you and me

we shall die soon—one day, one year more or less,

when or where, it's no matter. It's what we call

an indeterminate sentence. I'm hungry.

[*GARTH looks at MIRIAMNE.*]

MIRIAMNE. There was nothing left tonight.

HOBO. I've got a piece of bread.

[*He breaks his bread in two and hands half to the JUDGE.*]

GAUNT. I thank you, sir. [*He eats.*]

This is not good bread. [*He rises.*] Sir, I am used

to other company. Not better, perhaps, but their clothes

were different. These are what it's the fashion to call

the underprivileged.

TROCK. Oh, hell!

[*He turns toward the door.*]

MIO [*to TROCK*]. It would seem that you and the Judge know each other. [*TROCK faces him.*]

TROCK. I've been around.

MIO. Maybe you've met before.

TROCK. Maybe we have.

MIO. Will you tell me where?

TROCK. How long do you want to live?

MIO. How long? Oh, I've got big ideas about that.

TROCK. I thought so. Well, so far I've got nothing against you but your name, see? You keep it that way.

[*He opens the door. The rain still falls in torrents. He closes the door. As he turns from it, it opens again, and SHADOW, white, bloodstained and drip-*

## Coming-of-Age in Our Time

*ping, stands in the doorway. GARTH rises. TROCK turns.]*

GAUNT [*to the HOBO*]. Yet if one were careful of his health, ate sparingly, drank not at all, used himself wisely, it might be that even an old man could live to touch immortality. They may come on the secret sooner than we dare hope. You see? It does no harm to try.

TROCK [*backing away from SHADOW*]. By God, he's out of his gravel!

SHADOW [*leaning against the doorway holding a gun in his hands*]. Keep your hands where they belong, Trock. You know me.

TROCK. Don't! Don't! I had nothing to do with it! [*He backs to the opposite wall.*]

SHADOW. You said the doctor gave you six months to live—well, I don't give you that much. That's what you had, six months, and so you start bumping off your friends to make sure of your damn six months: I got it from you.

I know where I got it.

Because I wouldn't give it to the Judge. So he wouldn't talk.

TROCK. Honest to God—

SHADOW. What God?

The one that let you put three holes in me when I was your friend? Well, He let me get up again

and walk till I could find you. That's as as far as I get,

but I got there, by God! And I can hear you

even if I can't see!

[*He takes a staggering step forward.*]

A man needs blood

to keep going.—I got this far.—And now

I can't see!

It runs out too fast—too fast—when you've got three slugs clean through you.

Show me where he is, you fools! He's here! I got here! [*He drops the gun.*]

Help me! Help me! Oh, God! Oh, God! I'm going to die! Where does a man lie down?

I want to lie down!

[*MIRIAMNE starts toward SHADOW. GARTH and ESDRAS help him into the next room, MIRIAMNE following. TROCK squats in his corner, breathing hard, looking at the door. MIO stands, watching TROCK. GARTH returns, wiping his hand with a handkerchief. MIO picks up and pockets the gun. MIRIAMNE comes back and leans against the door jamb.*]

GAUNT. You will hear it said that an old man makes a good judge, being calm, clear-eyed, without passion. But this is not true. Only the young love truth and justice. The old are savage, wary, violent, swayed by maniac desires, cynical of friendship or love, open to bribery and the temptations of lust, corrupt and dastardly to the heart. I know these old men. What have they left to believe, what have they left to lose? Whorers of daughters, lickens of girls' shoes, contrivers of nastiness in the night, purveyors of perversion, worshippers of possession! Death is the only radical. He comes late, but he comes at last to put away the old men and give the young their places. It was time. [*He leans.*] Here's one I heard yesterday:

Marmaduke behind the barn

got his sister in a fix;

he says damn instead of darn;

ain't he cute? He's only six!

THE HOBO. He, he, he!

GAUNT.

And the hoot-owl hoots all night,

and the cuckoo cooks all day,

and what with a minimum grace of

God

we pass the time away.

*Winterset*

THE HOB0. He, he, he—I got yal [*He makes a sign with his thumb.*]

GAUNT [*sings*].

And he led her all around  
and laid her on the ground  
and he ruffled up the feathers of  
her cuckoo's nest!

HOB0. Ho, ho, hol

GAUNT. I am not taken with the way  
you laugh. You should cultivate restraint.  
[*ESDRAS re-enters.*]

TROCK. Shut the door.

ESDRAS. He won't come back again.

TROCK. I want the door shut! He was  
dead, I tell you! [*ESDRAS closes the door.*]  
And Romagna was dead, too, once! Can't  
they keep a man under ground?

MIO. No. No more! They don't stay  
under ground any more, and they don't  
stay under water! Why did you have him  
killed?

TROCK. Stay away from me! I know  
you!

MIO. Who am I, then?

TROCK. I know you, damn you! Your  
name's Romagnal

MIO. Yes! And Romagna was dead, too,  
and Shadow was dead, but the time's come  
when you can't keep them down, these  
dead men! They won't stay down! They  
come in with their heads shot off and their  
entrails dragging! Hundreds of them!  
One by one—all you ever killed! Watch  
the door! See!—It moves!

TROCK [*looking, fascinated, at the door*].  
Let me out of here! [*He tries to rise.*]

MIO [*the gun in his hand*]. Oh, no!  
You'll sit there and wait for them! One  
by one they'll come through that door,  
pulling their heads out of the gunny-sacks  
where you tied them—glauming over you  
with their rotten hands! They'll see with-  
out eyes and crawl over you—Shadow  
and the paymaster and all the rest of them

—putrescent bones without eyes! Now!  
Look! Look! For I'm first among them!

TROCK. I've done for better men than  
you! And I'll do for you!

GAUNT [*rapping on the table*]. Order,  
gentlemen, order! The witness will re-  
member that a certain decorum is essential  
in the court-room!

MIO. By God, he'll answer me!

GAUNT [*thundering*]. Silence! Silence!  
Let me remind you of courtesy toward the  
witness! What case is this you try?

MIO. The case of the state against Bar-  
tolomeo Romagna for the murder of the  
paymaster!

GAUNT. Sir, that was disposed of long  
ago!

MIO. Never disposed of, never, not while  
I live!

GAUNT. Then we'll have done with it  
now! I deny the appeal! I have denied  
the appeal before and I do so again!

HOB0. He, he!—He thinks he's in the  
moving pictures! [*A flash of lightning.*]

GAUNT. Who set that flash! Bailiff, clear  
the court! This is not Flemington, gentle-  
men! We are not conducting this case to  
make a journalistic holiday! [*The thun-  
der rumbles faintly. GARTH opens the out-  
side door and faces a solid wall of rain.*]  
Stop that man! He's one of the defend-  
ants! [*GARTH closes the door.*]

MIO. Then put him on the stand!

GARTH. What do you think you're do-  
ing?

MIO. Have you any objection?

GAUNT. The objection is not sustained.  
We will hear the new evidence. Call your  
witness.

MIO. Garth Esdras!

GAUNT. He will take the stand!

GARTH. If you want me to say what I  
said before I'll say it!

MIO. Call Trock Estrella then!

GAUNT. Trock Estrella to the stand!

## *Coming-of-Age in Our Time*

TROCK. No, by God!

MIO. Call Shadow, then! He'll talk! You thought he was dead, but he'll get up again and talk!

TROCK [*screaming*]. What do you want of me?

MIO. You killed the paymaster! You!

TROCK. You lie! It was Shadow killed him!

MIO. And now I know! Now I know!

GAUNT. Again I remind you of courtesy toward the witness!

MIO. I know them now!

Let me remind you of courtesy toward the dead!

He says that Shadow killed him! If Shadow were here he'd say it was Trock! There were three men involved

in the new version of the crime for which my father died! Shadow and Trock Estrella

as principals in the murder—Garth as witness!—

Why are they here together?—and you—the Judge—

why are you here? Why, because you were all afraid

and you drew together out of that fear to arrange

a story you could tell! And Trock killed Shadow

and meant to kill the Judge out of that same fear—

to keep them quiet! This is the thing I've hunted

over the earth to find out, and I'd be blind indeed if I missed it now!

[*To GAUNT.*] You heard what he said:

It was Shadow killed him! Now let the night conspire

with the sperm of hell! It's plain beyond denial

even to this fox of justice—and all his words

are curses on the wind! You lied! You lied!

You knew this too!

GAUNT [*low*]. Let me go. Let me go!

MIO. Then why did you let my father die?

GAUNT. Suppose it known, but there are things a judge must not believe

though they should head and fester underneath

and press in on his brain. Justice once rendered

in a clear burst of anger, righteously, upon a very common laborer, confessed an anarchist, the verdict found and the precise machinery of law invoked to know him guilty—think what furor

would rock the state if the court then flatly said:

all this was lies—must be reversed? It's better,

as any judge can tell you, in such cases, holding the common good to be worth more

than small injustice, to let the record stand, let one man die. For justice, in the main, is governed by opinion. Communities will have what they will have, and it's quite as well,

after all, to be rid of anarchists. Our rights as citizens can be maintained as rights only while we are held to be the peers of those who live about us. A vendor of fish

is not protected as a man might be who kept a market. I own I've sometimes wished

this was not so, but it is. The man you defend

was unfortunate—and his misfortune bore almost as heavily on me.—I'm broken—broken across. You're much too young to know

how bitter it is when a worn connection  
chars

and you can't remember—can't remember.  
[*He steps forward.*] You

will not repeat this? It will go no further?

MIO. No.

No further than the moon takes the tides  
—no further

than the news went when he died—

when you found him guilty

and they flashed that round the earth.

Wherever men

still breathe and think, and know what's  
done to them

by the powers above, they'll know. That's  
all I ask.

That'll be enough.

[*Trock has risen and looks darkly at MIO.*]

GAUNT. Thank you. For I've said some  
things

a judge should never say.

TROCK. Go right on talking.

Both of you. It won't get far, I guess.

MIO. Oh, you'll see to that?

TROCK. I'll see to it. Me and some others.  
Maybe I lost my grip there just for a  
minute.

That's all right.

MIO. Then see to it! Let it rain!

What can you do to me now when the  
night's on fire

with this thing I know? Now I could al-  
most wish

there was a god somewhere—I could al-  
most think

there was a god—and he somehow brought  
me here

and set you down before me here in the  
rain

where I could wring this out of you! For  
it's said,

and I've heard it, and I'm free! He was  
as I thought him,

true and noble and upright, even when  
he went

to a death contrived because he was as  
he was

and not your kind! Let it rain! Let the  
night speak fire

and the city go out with the tide, for he  
was a man

and I know you now, and I have my day!  
[*There is a heavy knock at the outside*

*door. MIRIAMNE opens it, at a glance*  
*from GARTH. The POLICEMAN is there*  
*in oilskins.*]

POLICEMAN. Evening. [*He steps in, fol-*  
*lowed by a SERGEANT, similarly dressed.*]

We're looking for someone  
might be here. Seen an old man around  
acting a little off?

[*To ESDRAS.*] You know the one

I mean. You saw him out there. Jeez!

You've got  
a funny crowd here!

[*He looks round. The HOBO shrinks into*  
*his corner.*] That's the one I saw.

What do you think?

SERGEANT. That's him. You mean to say  
you didn't know him by his pictures?  
[*He goes to GAUNT.*] Come on, old man.  
You're going home.

GAUNT. Yes, sir. I've lost my way.  
I think I've lost my way.

SERGEANT. I'll say you have.  
About three hundred miles. Now don't  
you worry.

We'll get you back.

GAUNT. I'm a person of some rank  
in my own city.

SERGEANT. We know that. One look at  
you

and we'd know that.

GAUNT. Yes, sir.

POLICEMAN. If it isn't Trock!  
Trock Estrella. How are you, Trock?

TROCK. Pretty good,  
Thanks.

POLICEMAN. Got out yesterday again, I  
hear?

● *Coming-of-Age in Our Time*

TROCK. That's right.

SERGEANT. Hi'ye, Trock?

TROCK. O. K.

SERGEANT. You know we got orders to watch you pretty close. Be good now, baby, or back you go. Don't try to pull anything, not in my district.

TROCK. No, sir.

SERGEANT. No bumping off. If you want my advice quit carrying a gun. Try earning your living for once.

TROCK. Yeah.

SERGEANT. That's an idea. Because if we find any stiffs on the river bank we'll know who to look for.

Mio. Then look in the other room! I accuse that man of murder! Trock Estrella!

He's a murderer!

POLICEMAN. Hello. I remember you.

SERGEANT. Well, what murder?

Mio. It was Trock Estrella that robbed the pay roll thirteen years ago and did the killing my father died for! You know the Romagna case! Romagna was innocent, and Trock Estrella guilty!

SERGEANT [*disgusted*]. Oh, what the hell! That's old stuff—the Romagna case.

POLICEMAN. Hey, Sarge! [*The SERGEANT and POLICEMAN come closer together.*]

The boy's a professional kidder. He took me over about half an hour ago. He kids the police and then ducks out!

SERGEANT. Oh, yeah?

Mio. I'm not kidding now. You'll find a dead man there in the next room and Estrella killed him!

SERGEANT. Thirteen years ago? And nobody smelled him yet?

Mio [*pointing*]. I accuse this man of two murders! He killed the paymaster long ago and had Shadow killed tonight. Look, look for yourself! He's there all right!

POLICEMAN. Look boy. You stood out there and put the booby sign on the dumb police because they're fresh out of Ireland. Don't try it twice.

SERGEANT [*to GARTH*]. Any corpses here?

GARTH. Not that I know of.

SERGEANT. I thought so. [*Mio looks at MIRIAMNE.*]

[*To Mio.*] Think up a better one.

Mio. Have I got to drag him out here where you can see him?

[*He goes toward the inner door.*] Can't you scent a murder when it's under your nose? Look in!

MIRIAMNE. No, no—there's no one—there's no one there!

SERGEANT [*looking at MIRIAMNE*]. Take a look inside.

POLICEMAN. Yes, sir. [*He goes into the inside room. The SERGEANT goes up to the door. The POLICEMAN returns.*] He's kidding, Sarge. If there's a cadaver in here I don't see it.

Mio. You're blind then!

[*He goes into the room, the SERGEANT following him.*]

SERGEANT. What do you mean?

[*He comes out, Mio following him.*] When you make a charge of murder it's better to have the corpus delicti, son. You're the kind puts in

fire alarms to see the engine!

Mio. By God, he was there! He went in there to die.

Winterset

SERGEANT. I'll bet he did.  
And I'm Haile Selassie's aunt! What's  
your name?

MIO. Romagna. [*To GARTH.*] What have  
you done with him?

GARTH. I don't know what you mean.

SERGEANT [*to GARTH*]. What's he talking  
about?

GARTH. I wish I could tell you.  
I don't know.

SERGEANT. He must have seen something.

POLICEMAN. He's got  
the Romagna case on the brain. You watch  
yourself,  
chump, or you'll get run in.

MIO. Then they're in it together!  
All of them!

[*To MIRIAMNE.*] Yes, and you!

GARTH. He's nuts, I say.

MIRIAMNE [*gently*].  
You have dreamed something—isn't it  
true?

You've dreamed—

But truly, there was no one—

[*Mio looks at her comprehendingly.*]

MIO. You want me to say it. [*He  
pauses.*] Yes, by God, I was dreaming.

SERGEANT [*to POLICEMAN*]. I guess you're  
right.

We'd better be going. Haven't you got a  
coat?

GAUNT. No, sir.

SERGEANT. I guess I'll have to lend you  
mine. [*He puts his oilskins on GAUNT.*]  
Come on, now. It's getting late. [*GAUNT,  
the POLICEMAN and the SERGEANT go out.*]

TROCK. They're welcome to him.  
His fuse is damp. Where is that walking  
fool

with the three slugs in him?

ESDRAS. He fell in the hall beyond  
and we left him there.

TROCK. That's lucky for some of us. Is

he out this time.

or is he still butting around?

ESDRAS. He's dead.

TROCK. That's perfect.

[*To MIO.*] Don't try using your firearms,  
amigo baby,

the Sarge is outside. [*He turns to go.*]

Better ship that carrion  
back in the river! The one that walks  
when he's dead;

maybe he'll walk the distance for you.

GARTH. Coming back?

TROCK. Well, if I come back  
you'll see me. If I don't, you won't. Let  
the punk  
go far as he likes. Turn him loose and  
let him go.

And may you all rot in hell.

[*He pulls his coat around him and goes  
to left. MIRIAMNE climbs up to look  
out a window.*]

MIRIAMNE. He's climbing up to the  
street, along the bridgehead. [*She turns.*]  
Quick, Mio! It's safe now! Quick!

GARTH. Let him do as he likes.

MIRIAMNE. What do you mean? Garth!  
He means to kill him!

You know that!

GARTH. I've no doubt Master Romagna  
can run his own campaign.

MIRIAMNE. But he'll be killed!

MIO. Why did you lie about Shadow?  
[*There is a pause. GARTH shrugs, walks  
across the room, and sits.*] You were one  
of the gang!

GARTH. I can take a death if I have to  
Go tell your story,

only watch your step, for I warn you,  
Trock's out gunning  
and you may not walk very far. Oh, I  
could defend it

but it's hardly worth while.

If they get Trock they get me too.

Go tell them. You owe me nothing.



*Coming-of-Age in Our Time*

ESDRAS. This Trock you saw,  
no one defends him. He's earned his death  
so often  
there's nobody to regret it. But his crime,  
his same crime that has dogged you,  
dogged us down  
from what little we had, to live here  
among the drains,  
where the waterbugs break out like a  
scrofula  
on what we eat—and if there's lower to go  
we'll go there when you've told your  
story. And more  
that I haven't heart to speak—

Mio [*to GARTH*]. My father died  
in your place. And you could have saved  
him!

You were one of the gang!

GARTH. Why, there you are.  
You certainly owe me nothing.

MIRIAMNE [*moaning*]. I want to die.  
I want to go away.

Mio. Yes, and you lied!  
And trapped me into it!

MIRIAMNE. But Mio, he's my brother.  
I couldn't give them my brother.

Mio. No. You couldn't.  
You were quite right. The gods were  
damned ironic  
tonight, and they've worked it out.

ESDRAS. What will be changed  
if it comes to trial again? More blood  
poured out  
to a mythical justice, but your father lying  
still  
where he lies now.

Mio. The bright, ironical gods!  
What fun they have in heaven! When a  
man prays hard  
for any gift, they give it, and then one  
more  
to boot that makes it useless.

[*To MIRIAMNE*.] You might have picked

some other stranger to dance with!

MIRIAMNE. I know.

Mio. Or chosen  
some other evening to sit outside in the  
rain.

But no, it had to be this. All my life long  
I've wanted only one thing, to say to the  
world

and prove it: the man you killed was clean  
and true

and full of love as the twelve-year-old that  
stood

and taught in the temple. I can say that  
now

and give my proofs—and now you stick  
a girl's face

between me and the rites I've sworn the  
dead

shall have of me! You ask too much! Your  
brother

can take his chance! He was ready enough  
to let

an innocent man take certainty for him  
to pay for the years he's had. That parts  
us, then,

but we're parted anyway, by the same  
dark wind

that blew us together. I shall say what I  
have to say.

[*He steps back.*] And I'm not welcome  
here.

MIRIAMNE. But don't go now! You've  
stayed  
too long! He'll be waiting!

Mio. Well, is this any safer?  
Let the winds blow, the four winds of the  
world,  
and take us to the four winds.

[*The three are silent before him. He turns  
and goes out.*]

CURTAIN

## Winterset

### ACT III

[The river bank outside the tenement, a little before the close of the previous act. The rain still falls through the street lamps. The TWO NATTY YOUNG MEN IN SERGE AND GRAY are leaning against the masonry in a ray of light, concentrating on a game of chance. Each holds in his hand a packet of ten or fifteen crisp bills. They compare the numbers on the top notes and immediately a bill changes hands. This goes on with varying fortune until the tide begins to run toward the 1ST GUNMAN, who has accumulated nearly the whole supply. They play on in complete silence, evidently not wishing to make any noise. Occasionally they raise their heads slightly to look carefully about. Luck begins to favor the 2ND GUNMAN, and the notes come his way. Neither evinces the slightest interest in how the game goes. They merely play on, bored, half-absorbed. There is a slight noise at the tenement door. They put the bills away and watch. TROCK comes out, pulls the door shut and comes over to them. He says a few words too low to be heard, and without changing expression the YOUNG MEN saunter toward the right. TROCK goes out to the left, and the 2ND PLAYER, catching that out of the corner of his eye, lingers in a glimmer of light to go on with the game. The 1ST, with an eye on the tenement door, begins to play without ado, and the bills again shift back and forth, then concentrate in the hands of the 1ST GUNMAN. The 2ND shrugs his shoulders, searches his pockets, finds one bill, and playing with it begins to win heavily. They hear the door opening, and putting the notes away, slip out in front of the rock. MIO emerges, closes the door, looks around him and walks to the left. Near the corner of the tenement he pauses,

reaches out his hand to try the rain, looks up toward the street, and stands uncertainly a moment. He returns and leans against the tenement wall. MIRIAMNE comes out. MIO continues to look off into space as if unaware of her. She looks away.]

MIO. This rather takes one off his high horse.—What I mean, tough weather for a hegira. You see, this is my sleeping suit, and if I get it wet—basta!

MIRIAMNE. If you could only hide here.

MIO. Hide?

MIRIAMNE. Lucia would take you in. The street-piano man.

MIO. At the moment I'm afflicted with claustrophobia. I prefer to die in the open, seeking air.

MIRIAMNE. But you could stay there till daylight.

MIO. You're concerned about me.

MIRIAMNE. Shall I ask him?

MIO. No. On the other hand there's a certain reason in your concern. I looked up the street and our old friend Trock hunches patiently under the warehouse eaves.

MIRIAMNE. I was sure of that.

MIO. And here I am, a young man on a cold night, waiting the end of the rain. Being read my lesson by a boy, a blind boy—you know the one I mean. Knee-deep in the salt-marsh, Miriamne, bitten from within, fought.

MIRIAMNE. Wouldn't it be better if you came back in the house?

MIO. You forget my claustrophobia.

MIRIAMNE. Let me walk with you, then. Please. If I stay beside you he wouldn't dare.

MIO. And then again he might.—We

## Coming-of-Age in Our Time

don't speak the same language, Miriamne.

MIRIAMNE. I betrayed you. Forgive me.

MIO. I wish I knew this region. There's probably a path along the bank.

MIRIAMNE. Yes. Shadow went that way.

MIO. That's true, too. So here I am, a young man on a wet night, and blind in my weather eye. Stay and talk to me.

MIRIAMNE. If it happens—it's my fault.

MIO. Not at all, sweet. You warned me to keep away. But I would have it. Now I have to find a way out. It's like a chess game. If you think long enough there's always a way out.—For one or the other.—I wonder why white always wins and black always loses in the problems. White to move and mate in three moves. But what if white were to lose—ah, what then? Why, in that case, obviously black would be white and white would be black.—As it often is.—As we often are.—Might makes white. Losers turn black. Do you think I'd have time to draw a gun?

MIRIAMNE. No.

MIO. I'm a fair shot. Also I'm fair game.

[*The door of the tenement opens and*

*GARTH comes out to look about quickly. Seeing only MIO and MIRIAMNE he goes in and comes out again almost immediately carrying one end of a door on which a body lies covered with a cloth. The HOBO carries the other end. They go to the right with their burden.*]

This is the burial of Shadow, then; feet first he dips, and leaves the haunts of men.

Let us make mourn for Shadow, wetly lying,

in elegiac stanzas and sweet crying.

Be gentle with him, little cold waves and fishes;

nibble him not, respect his skin and tissues—

MIRIAMNE. Must you say such things?

MIO. My dear, some requiem is fitting over the dead, even for Shadow. But the last rhyme was bad.

Whittle him not, respect his dying wishes.

That's better. And then to conclude:

His aromatic virtues, slowly rising will circumnamb the isle, beyond disguising.

He clung to life beyond the wont of men.

Time and his silence drink us all. Amen.

How I hate these identicals. The French allow them, but the French have no principles anyway. You know, Miriamne, there's really nothing mysterious about human life. It's purely mechanical, like an electric appliance. Stop the engine that runs the generator and the current's broken. When we think the brain gives off a small electrical discharge—quite measurable, and constant within limits. But that's not what makes your hair stand up when frightened.

MIRIAMNE. I think it's a mystery.

MIO. Human life? We'll have to wear veils if we're to keep it a mystery much longer. Now if Shadow and I were made up into sausages we'd probably make very good sausages.

MIRIAMNE. Don't—

MIO. I'm sorry. I speak from a high place, far off, long ago, looking down. The cortège returns. [*GARTH and the HOBO return, carrying the door, the cloth lying loosely over it.*] I hope you placed an obol in his mouth to pay the ferryman? Even among the Greeks a little money was prerequisite to Elysium. [*GARTH and the HOBO go inside, silent.*] No? It's grim to think of Shadow lingering among lesser shades on the hither side. For lack of a small gratuity.

[ESDRAS comes out the open door and closes it behind him.]

ESDRAS. You must wait here, Mio, or go inside. I know you don't trust me, and I haven't earned your trust.

You're young enough to seek truth—and there is no truth; and I know that—but I shall call the police and see that you get safely off.

Mio. It's a little late for that.

ESDRAS. I shall try.

Mio. And your terms? For I daresay you make terms?

ESDRAS. No.

Mio. Then let me remind you what will happen.

The police will ask some questions. When they're answered they'll ask more, and before they're done with it

your son will be implicated.

ESDRAS. Must he be?

Mio. I shall not keep quiet. [*A pause.*]

ESDRAS. Still, I'll go.

Mio. I don't ask help, remember. I make no truce.

He's not on my conscience, and I'm not on yours.

ESDRAS. But you could make it easier, so easily. He's my only son. Let him live.

Mio. His chance of survival's better than mine, I'd say.

ESDRAS. I'll go.

Mio. I don't urge it.

ESDRAS. No. I put my son's life in your hands.

When you're gone, that may come to your mind.

Mio. Don't count on it.

ESDRAS. Oh, I count on nothing.

[*He turns to go. MIRIAMNE runs over to him and silently kisses his hands.*]

Not mine, not mine, my daughter! They're guilty hands.

[*He goes out left. GARTH's violin is heard within.*]

Mio. There was a war in heaven once, all the angels on one side, and all the devils on the other, and since that time disputes have raged among the learned, concerning

whether the demons won, or the angels.

Maybe the angels won, after all.

MIRIAMNE. And again, perhaps there are no demons or angels.

Mio. Oh, there are none. But I could love your father.

MIRIAMNE. I love him. You see, he's afraid because he's old. The less one has to lose the more he's afraid.

Mio. Suppose one had only a short stub end of life, or held a flashlight with the batteries run down till the bulb was dim, and knew that he could live while the glow lasted. Or suppose one knew

that while he stood in a little shelter of time under a bridgehead, say, he could live, and then,

from then on, nothing. Then to lie and turn

with the earth and sun, and regard them not in the least

when the bulb was extinguished or he stepped beyond

his circle into the cold? How could he live

that last dim quarter-hour, before he went, minus all recollection, to grow in grass between cobblestones?

## *Coming-of-Age in Our Time*

MIRIAMNE. Let me put my arms round you, Mio.

Then if anything comes, it's for me, too.  
[*She puts both arms round him.*]

Mio. Only suppose  
this circle's charmed! To be safe until he  
steps  
from this lighted space into dark! Time  
pauses here  
and high eternity grows in one quarter-  
hour  
in which to live.

MIRIAMNE. Let me see if anyone's  
there—  
there in the shadows.

[*She looks toward the right.*]

Mio. It might blast our eternity—  
blow it to bits. No, don't go. This is for-  
ever,

here where we stand. And I ask you,  
Miriamne,

how does one spend a forever?

MIRIAMNE. You're frightened?

Mio. Yes.

So much that time stands still.

MIRIAMNE. Why didn't I speak—  
tell them—when the officers were here? I  
failed you  
in that one moment!

Mio. His life for mine? Oh, no.  
I wouldn't want it, and you couldn't  
give it.

And if I should go on living we're cut  
apart  
by that brother of yours.

MIRIAMNE. Are we?

Mio. Well, think about it.

A body lies between us, buried in quick-  
lime.

Your allegiance is on the other side of  
that grave  
and not to me.

MIRIAMNE. No, Mio! Mio, I love you!

Mio. I love you, too, but in case my life  
went on

beyond that barrier of dark—then Garth  
would run his risk of dying.

MIRIAMNE. He's punished, Mio.

His life's been torment to him. Let him  
go,

for my sake, Mio.

Mio. I wish I could. I wish  
I'd never seen him—or you. I've steeped  
too long  
in this thing. It's in my teeth and bones.

I can't

let go or forget. And I'll not add my lie  
to the lies that cumber his ground. We  
live our days

in a storm of lies that drifts the truth too  
deep

for path or shovel; but I've set my foot on  
a truth

for once, and I'll trail it down!

[*A silence. MIRIAMNE looks out to the  
right.*]

MIRIAMNE. There's someone there—  
I heard—

[*CARR comes in from the right.*]

Mio. It's Carr.

CARR. That's right. No doubt about it.  
Excuse me.

Mio. Glad to see you. This is Miriamne.  
Carr's a friend of mine.

CARR. You're better employed  
than when I saw you last.

Mio. Bow to the gentleman,  
Miriamne. That's meant for you.

MIRIAMNE. Thank you, I'm sure.  
Should I leave you, Mio? You want to  
talk?

Mio. Oh, no,  
we've done our talking.

MIRIAMNE. But—

CARR. I'm the one's out of place—  
I wandered back because I got worried  
about you,

*Winterset*

that's the truth.—Oh—those two fellows  
with the hats  
down this way, you know, the ones that  
ran  
after we heard the shooting—they're back  
again,  
lingering or malingering down the bank,  
revisiting the crime, I guess. They may  
mean well.

MIO. I'll try to avoid them.

CARR. I didn't care  
for the way they looked at me.—No luck,  
I suppose,  
with that case history? The investigation  
you had on hand?

MIO. I can't say. By the way,  
the stiff that fell in the water and we saw  
swirling  
down the eddy, he came trudging up,  
later on,  
long enough to tell his name. His name  
was Shadow  
but he's back in the water now. It's all in  
an evening.

These things happen here.

CARR. Good God!

MIO. I know.

I wouldn't believe it if you told it.

CARR. But—  
the man was alive?

MIO. Oh, not for long! He's dunked  
for good this time. That's all that's hap-  
pened.

CARR. Well,  
if you don't need me—

MIRIAMNE. You had a message to send—  
have you forgotten—?

MIO. I?—Yes, I had a message—  
but I won't send it—not now.

MIRIAMNE. Then I will—!

MIO. No.

Let it go the way it is! It's all arranged  
another way. You've been a good scout,

Carr,

the best I ever knew on the road.

CARR. That sounds  
like making your will.

MIO. Not yet, but when I do  
I've thought of something to leave you. It's  
the view  
of Mt. Rainier from the Seattle jail,  
snow over cloud. And the rusty chain in  
my pocket

from a pair of handcuffs my father wore.

That's all  
the worldly goods I'm seized of.

CARR. Look, Mio—hell—  
if you're in trouble—

MIO. I'm not. Not at all. I have  
a genius that attends me where I go,  
and guards me now. I'm fine.

CARR. Well, that's good news.  
He'll have his work cut out.

MIO. Oh, he's a genius.

CARR. I'll see you then.  
I'll be at the Grand Street place. I'm lucky  
tonight,

and I can pay. I could even pay for two.

MIO. Thanks, I may take you up.

CARR. Good night.

MIO. Right, Carr.

CARR [to MIRIAMNE]. Good night.

MIRIAMNE [after a pause]. Good night.

[CARR goes out to the left.]

Why did you do that? He's your genius,

Mio,  
and you let him go.

MIO. I couldn't help it.

MIRIAMNE. Call him.  
Run after him and call him!

MIO. I tried to say it  
and it strangled in my throat. I might  
have known  
you'd win in the end.

MIRIAMNE. Is it for me?

MIO. For you?

It stuck in my throat, that's all I know.

MIRIAMNE. Oh, Mio,

## Coming-of-Age in Our Time

I never asked for that! I only hoped

Garth could go clear.

MIO. Well, now he will.

MIRIAMNE. But you—

It was your chance!

MIO. I've lost

my taste for revenge if it falls on you. Oh,  
God,

deliver me from the body of this death  
I've dragged behind me all these years!

Miriamne!

Miriamne!

MIRIAMNE. Yes!

MIO. Miriamne, if you love me  
teach me a treason to what I am, and have  
been,  
till I learn to live like a man! I think I'm  
waking  
from a long trauma of hate and fear and  
death

that's hemmed me from my birth—and  
glimpse a life  
to be lived in hope—but it's young in me  
yet, I can't  
get free, or forgive! But teach me how to  
live

and forget to hate!

MIRIAMNE. He would have forgiven.

MIO. He?

MIRIAMNE. Your father. [*A pause.*]

MIO. Yes. [*Another pause.*]

You'll think it strange, but I've never  
remembered that.

MIRIAMNE. How can I help you?

MIO. You have.

MIRIAMNE. If I were a little older—if I  
knew  
the things to say! I can only put out my  
hands  
and give you back the faith you bring to  
me  
by being what you are. Because to me  
you are all hope and beauty and bright-  
ness drawn

across what's black and meant

MIO. He'd have forgiven—

Then there's no more to say—I've groped  
long enough  
through this everglades of old revenges—  
here

the road ends.—Miriamne, Miriamne,  
the iron I wore so long—it's eaten through  
and fallen from me. Let me have your  
arms.

They'll say we're children—Well—the  
world's made up of children.

MIRIAMNE. Yes.

MIO. But it's too late for me.

MIRIAMNE. No.

[*She goes into his arms, and they kiss for  
the first time.*]

Then we'll meet again?

MIO. Yes.

MIRIAMNE. Where?

MIO. I'll write—

or send Carr to you.

MIRIAMNE. You won't forget?

MIO. Forget?

Whatever streets I walk, you'll walk them,  
too,

from now on, and whatever roof or stars  
I have to house me, you shall share my  
roof

and stars and morning. I shall not forget.

MIRIAMNE. God keep you!

MIO. And keep you. And this to re-  
member!

if I should die, Miriamne, this half-hour  
is our eternity. I came here seeking  
light in darkness, running from the dawn,  
and stumbled on a morning.

[*One of the YOUNG MEN IN SERGE strolls  
in casually from the right, looks up  
and down without expression, then,  
seemingly having forgotten some-  
thing, retraces his steps and goes out.  
ESDRAS comes in slowly from the left.  
He has lost his hat, and his face is*

Winterset

*bleeding from a slight cut on the temple. He stands abjectly near the tene-ment.]*

MIRIAMNE.. Father—what is it? [*She goes toward ESDRAS.*]

ESDRAS. Let me alone. [*He goes nearer to Mio.*]

He wouldn't let me pass.

The street's so icy up along the bridge

I had to crawl on my knees—he kicked me back

three times—and then he held me there—

I swear

what I could do I did! I swear to you

I'd save you if I could.

Mio. What makes you think that I need saving?

ESDRAS. Child, save yourself if you can! He's waiting for you.

Mio. Well, we knew that before.

ESDRAS. He won't wait much longer.

He'll come here—

he told me so. Those damned six months of his—

he wants them all—and you're to die—you'd spread

his guilt—I had to listen to it—

Mio. Wait—

[*He walks forward and looks casually to the right, then returns.*]

There must be some way up through the house and out across the roof—

ESDRAS. He's watching that. But come in—

and let me look.—

Mio. I'll stay here, thanks. Once in and I'm a rat in a deadfall—I'll stay here—look for me if you don't mind.

ESDRAS. Then watch for me—

I'll be on the roof—

[*He goes in hurriedly.*]

Mio [*looking up*]. Now all you silent powers

that make the sleet and dark, and never yet

have spoken, give us a sign, let the throw be ours

this once, on this longest night, when the winter sets

his foot on the threshold leading up to spring

and enters with remembered cold—let fall some mercy with the rain. We are two lovers

here in your night, and we wish to live.

MIRIAMNE. Oh, Mio—

if you pray that way, nothing good will come!

You're bitter, Mio.

Mio. How many floors has this building?

MIRIAMNE. Five or six. It's not as high 'as the bridge.

Mio. No, I thought not. How many pomegranate seeds did you eat, Persephone?

MIRIAMNE. Oh, darling, darling,

if you die, don't die alone. ,

Mio. I'm afraid I'm damned to hell, and you're not damned at all.

Good God,

how long he takes to climb!

MIRIAMNE. The stairs are steep.

[*A slight pause.*]

Mio. I'll follow him.

MIRIAMNE. He's there—at the window—now.

He waves you to go back, not to go in.

Mio, see, that path between the rocks—they're not watching that—they're out at the river—

I can see them there—they can't watch both—

it leads to a street above.—

Mio. I'll try it, then.

Kiss me. You'll hear. But if you never hear—



## Coming-of-Age in Our Time

then I'm the king of hell, Persephone,  
and I'll expect you.

MIRIAMNE. Oh, lover, keep safe.

Mio. Good-by.

[*He slips out quickly between the rocks. There is a quick machine gun rat-tat. The violin stops. MIRIAMNE runs toward the path. Mio comes back slowly, a hand pressed under his heart.*]

It seems you were mistaken.

MIRIAMNE. Oh, God, forgive me! [*She puts an arm around him. He sinks to his knees.*]

Where is it, Mio? Let me help you in!

Quick, quick,  
let me help you!

Mio. I hadn't thought to choose—this—  
ground—  
but it will do. [*He slips down.*]

MIRIAMNE. Oh, God, forgive me!

Mio. Yes?

The king of hell was not forgiven then,  
Dis is his name and Hades is his home—  
and he goes alone—

MIRIAMNE. Why does he bleed so? Mio,  
if you go  
I shall go with you.

Mio. It's better to stay alive.  
I wanted to stay alive—because of you—  
I leave you that—and what he said to me  
dying:

I love you, and will love you after I die.  
Tomorrow, I shall still love you, as I've  
loved  
the stars I'll never see, and all the morn-  
ings  
that might have been yours and mine. Oh,  
Miriamne,  
you taught me this.

MIRIAMNE. If only I'd never seen you  
then you could live—

Mio. That's blasphemy—Oh, God,  
there might have been some easier way  
of it.

You didn't want me to die, did you,  
Miriamne—?

You didn't send me away—?

MIRIAMNE. Oh, never, never—

Mio. Forgive me—kiss me—I've got  
blood on your lips—

I'm sorry—it doesn't matter—I'm sorry—  
[ESDRAS and GARTH come out.]

MIRIAMNE. Mio—

I'd have gone to die myself—you must  
hear this, Mio,

I'd have died to help you—you must lis-  
ten, sweet,

you must hear it—[*She rises.*]

I can die, too, see! You! There!

You in the shadows!—You killed him to  
silence him!

[*She walks toward the path.*]

But I'm not silenced! All that he knew I  
know,

and I'll tell it tonight! Tonight—

tell it and scream it

through all the streets—that Trock's a  
murderer

and he hired you for this murder!

Your work's not done—

and you won't live long! Do you hear?

You're murderers, and I know who you  
are!

[*The machine gun speaks again. She sinks to her knees. GARTH runs to her.*]

GARTH. You little fool! [*He tries to lift her.*]

MIRIAMNE. Don't touch me! [*She crawls toward Mio.*]

Look, Mio! They killed me, too. Oh, you  
can believe me

now, Mio. You can believe I wouldn't hurt  
you,

because I'm dying! Why doesn't he an-  
swer me?

Oh, now he'll never know!

[*She sinks down, her hand over her mouth, choking. GARTH kneels beside her, then rises, shuddering. The HOBO*

*Letter to Lord Byron*

*comes out. LUCIA and PINY look out.]*

ESDRAS. It lacked only this.

GARTH. Yes. [*ESDRAS bends over MIRIAMNE, then rises slowly.*]

Why was the bastard born? Why did he come here?

ESDRAS. Miriamne—Miriamne—yes, and Mio,

one breath shall call you now—forgive us both—

forgive the ancient evil of the earth that brought you here—

GARTH. Why must she be a fool?

ESDRAS. Well, they were wiser than you and I. To die

when you are young and untouched, that's beggary

to a miser of years, but the devils locked in synod

shake and are daunted when men set their lives

at hazard for the heart's love, and lose.

And these,

who were yet children, will weigh more than all

a city's elders when the experiment

is reckoned up in the end. Oh, Miriamne, and Mio—Mio, my son—know this where

you lie,

this is the glory of earth-born men and women,

not to cringe, never to yield, but standing, take defeat implacable and defiant, die unsubmitting. I wish that I'd died so, long ago; before you're old you'll wish that you had died as they have. On this star,

in this hard star-adventure, knowing not what the fires mean to right and left, nor whether

a meaning was intended or presumed, man can stand up, and look out blind, and say:

in all these turning lights I find no clue, only a masterless night, and in my blood no certain answer, yet is my mind my own,

yet is my heart a cry toward something dim

in distance, which is higher than I am and makes me emperor of the endless dark

even in seeking! What odds and ends of life

men may live otherwise, let them live, and then

go out, as I shall go, and you. Our part is only to bury them. Come, take her up. They must not lie here.

[*LUCIA and PINY come near to help. ESDRAS and GARTH stoop to carry MIRIAMNE.*]

CURTAIN

*from* LETTER TO LORD BYRON, Part IV

*by* W. H. AUDEN

The Great War had begun: but masters' scrutiny

And fists of big boys were the war to us;

It was as harmless as the Indian Mutiny,

A beating from the Head was dangerous.

But once when half the form put down *Bellus*.

We were accused of that most deadly sin,

Wanting the Kaiser and the Huns to win.

From W. H. Auden and Louis MacNeice, *Letters from Iceland*. Copyright, 1937, by W. H. Auden and Louis MacNeice. Reprinted by permission of Random House, Inc.

### *Coming-of-Age in Our Time*

The way in which we really were affected  
Was having such a varied lot to teach us.  
The best were fighting, as the King expected,  
The remnant either elderly grey creatures,  
Or characters with most peculiar features.  
Many were raggable, a few were waxy,  
One had to leave abruptly in a taxi.

Surnames I must not write—O Reginald,  
You at least taught us that which fadeth not,  
Our earliest visions of the great wide world;  
The beer and biscuits that your favourites got,  
Your tales revealing you a first-class shot,  
Your riding breeks, your drama called *The Waves*,  
A few of us will carry to our graves.

'Half a lunatic, half a knave.' No doubt  
A holy terror to the staff at tea;  
A good headmaster must have soon found out  
Your moral character was all at sea;  
I question if you'd got a pass degree:  
But little children bless your kind that knocks  
Away the edifying stumbling blocks.

How can I thank you? For it only shows  
(Let me ride just this once my hobby-horse),  
There're things a good headmaster never knows.  
There must be sober schoolmasters, of course,  
But what a prep school really puts across  
Is knowledge of the world we'll soon be lost in:  
To-day it's more like Dickens than Jane Austen.

I hate the modern trick, to tell the truth,  
Of straightening out the kinks in the young mind,  
Our passion for the tender plant of youth,  
Our hatred for all weeds of any kind.  
Slogans are bad: the best that I can find  
Is this: 'Let each child have that's in our care  
As much neurosis as the child can bear.'

In this respect, at least, my bad old Adam is  
Pigheadedly against the general trend;  
And has no use for all these new academies  
Where readers of the better weeklies send  
The child they probably did not intend,

*Letter to Lord Byron*

To paint a lampshade, marry, or keep pigeons,  
Or make a study of the world religions.

Goddess of bossy underlings, Normality!  
What murders are committed in thy name!  
Totalitarian is thy state Reality,  
Reeking of antiseptics and the shame  
Of faces that all look and feel the same.  
Thy Muse is one unknown to classic histories,  
The topping figure of the hockey mistress.

From thy dread Empire not a soul's exempted:  
More than the nursemaids pushing prams in parks,  
By thee the intellectuals are tempted,  
O, to commit the treason of the clerks,  
Bewitched by thee to literary sharks.  
But I must leave thee to thy office stool,  
I must get on now to my public school.

Men had stopped throwing stones at one another,  
Butter and Father had come back again;  
Gone were the holidays we spent with Mother  
In furnished rooms on mountain, moor, and fen;  
And gone those summer Sunday evenings, when  
Along the seafronts fled a curious noise,  
'Eternal Father,' sung by three young boys.

Nation spoke Peace, or said she did, with nation;  
The sexes tried their best to look the same;  
Morals lost value during the inflation,  
The great Victorians kindly took the blame:  
Visions of Dada to the Post-War came,  
Sitting in cafés, nostrils stuffed with bread,  
Above the recent and the straight-laced dead.

I've said my say on public schools elsewhere:  
Romantic friendship, prefects, bullying,  
I shall not deal with, c'est une autre affaire.  
Those who expect them, will get no such thing,  
It is the strictly relevant I sing.  
Why should they grumble? They've the Greek Anthology.  
And all the spicier bits of Anthropology.

### *Coming-of-Age in Our Time*

We all grow up the same way, more or less;  
Life is not known to give away her presents;  
She only swops. The unself-consciousness  
That children share with animals and peasants  
Sinks in the 'stürm und drang' of Adolescence.  
Like other boys I lost my taste for sweets,  
Discovered sunsets, passion, God, and Keats.

I shall recall a single incident  
No more. I spoke of mining engineering  
As the career on which my mind was bent,  
But for some time my fancies had been veering;  
Mirages of the future kept appearing;  
Crazes had come and gone in short, sharp gales,  
For motor-bikes, photography, and whales.

But indecision broke off with a clean-cut end  
One afternoon in March at half-past three  
When walking in a ploughed field with a friend;  
Kicking a little stone, he turned to me  
And said, 'Tell me, do you write poetry?'  
I never had, and said so, but I knew  
That very moment what I wished to do.

Without a bridge passage this leads me straight  
Into the theme marked 'Oxford' on my score  
From pages twenty-five to twenty-eight.  
Aesthetic trills I'd never heard before  
Rose from the strings, shrill poses from the cor;  
The woodwind chattered like a pre-war Russian,  
'Art' boomed the brass, and 'Life' thumped the percussion.

A raw provincial, my good taste was tardy,  
And Edward Thomas I as yet preferred;  
I was still listening to Thomas Hardy  
Putting divinity about a bird;  
But Eliot spoke the still unspoken word;  
For gasworks and dried tubers I forsook  
The clock at Granchester, the English rook.

All youth's intolerant certainty was mine as  
I faced life in a double-breasted suit;  
I bought and praised but did not read Aquinas,

*Letter to Lord Byron*

At the *Criterion's* verdict I was mute,  
Though Arnold's I was ready to refute;  
And through the quads dogmatic words rang clear,  
'Good poetry is classic and austere.'

So much for Art. Of course Life had its passions too;  
The student's flesh like his imagination  
Makes facts fit theories and has fashions too.  
We were the tail, a sort of poor relation  
To that debauched, eccentric generation  
That grew up with their fathers at the War,  
And made new glosses on the noun Amor.

Three years passed quickly while the Isis went  
Down to the sea for better or for worse;  
Then to Berlin, not Carthage, I was sent  
With money from my parents in my purse,  
And ceased to see the world in terms of verse.  
I met a chap called Layard and he fed  
New doctrines into my receptive head.

Part came from Lane, and part from D. H. Lawrence;  
Gide, though I didn't know it then, gave part.  
They taught me to express my deep abhorrence  
If I caught anyone preferring Art  
To Life and Love and being Pure-in-Heart.  
I lived with crooks but seldom was molested;  
The Pure-in-Heart can never be arrested.

He's gay; no bludgeonings of chance can spoil it,  
The Pure-in-Heart loves all men on a par,  
And has no trouble with his private toilet;  
The Pure-in-Heart is never ill; catarrh  
Would be the yellow streak, the brush of tar;  
Determined to be loving and forgiving,  
I came back home to try and earn my living.

The only thing you never turned your hand to  
Was teaching English in a boarding school.  
To-day it's a profession that seems grand to  
Those whose alternative's an office stool;  
For budding authors it's become the rule.  
To many an unknown genius postmen bring  
Typed notices from Rabbittarse and String.

### *Coming-of-Age in Our Time*

The Head's M.A., a bishop is a patron,  
The assistant staff is highly qualified;  
Health is the care of an experienced matron,  
The arts are taught by ladies from outside;  
The food is wholesome and the grounds are wide;  
Their aim is training character and poise,  
With special coaching for the backward boys.

I found the pay good and had time to spend it,  
Though others may not have the good luck I did:  
For You I'd hesitate to recommend it;  
Several have told me that they can't abide it.  
Still, if one tends to get a bit one-sided,  
It's pleasant as it's easy to secure  
The hero worship of the immature.

More, it's a job, and jobs to-day are rare:  
All the ideals in the world won't feed us  
Although they give our crimes a certain air.  
So barons of the press who know their readers  
Employ to write their more appalling leaders,  
Instead of Satan's horned and hideous minions,  
Clever young men of liberal opinions.

Which brings me up to nineteen-thirty-five;  
Six months of film work is another story  
I can't tell now. But, here I am, alive  
Knowing the true source of that sense of glory  
That still surrounds the England of the Tory,  
Come only to the rather tame conclusion  
That no man by himself has life's solution.

### PORTRAIT (2)

*by* KENNETH FEARING

The clear brown eyes, kindly and alert, with 12-20 vision, give confident regard to  
the passing world through R. K. Lampert & Company lenses framed in gold;  
His soul, however, is all his own;  
Arndt Brothers necktie and hat (with feather) supply a touch of youth.

From Kenneth Fearing, *Collected Poems*. Copyright, 1940, by Random House, Inc. Reprinted  
by permission of Random House, Inc. Originally appeared in *The New Yorker*.

## Flammonde

With his soul his own, he drives, drives, chats and drives,  
The first and second bicuspid, lower right, replaced by bridgework while two incisors have porcelain crowns;

(Render unto Federal, state and city Caesar, but not unto time;  
Render nothing unto time until Amalgamated Death serves final notice, in proper form;

The vault is ready;  
The will has been drawn by Clagget, Clagget, Clagget & Brown;  
The policies are adequate, Confidential's best, reimbursing for disability, partial or complete, with double indemnity should the end be a pure and simple accident)

Nothing unto time,  
Nothing unto change, nothing unto fate,  
Nothing unto you, and nothing unto me, or to any other known or unknown party or parties, living or deceased;

But Mercury shoes, with special arch supports, take much of the wear and tear;  
On the course, a custombuilt driver corrects a tendency to slice;  
Love's ravages have been repaired (it was a textbook case) by Drs. Schultz, Lightner, Mannheim, and Goode,  
While all of it is enclosed in excellent tweed, with Mr. Baumer's personal attention to the shoulders and the waist;

And all of it now roving, chatting amiably through space in a Plymouth 6.  
With his soul (his own) at peace, soothed by Walter Lippmann, and sustained by Haig & Haig.

## FLAMMONDE

by EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON

The man Flammonde, from God knows where,	Erect, with his alert repose
With firm address and foreign air,	About him, and about his clothes,
With news of nations in his talk	He pictured all tradition hears
And something royal in his walk,	Of what we owe to fifty years.
With glint of iron in his eyes,	His cleansing heritage of taste
But never doubt, nor yet surprise,	Paraded neither want nor waste;
Appeared, and stayed, and held his head	And what he needed for his fee
As one by kings accredited.	To live, he borrowed graciously.

From E. A. Robinson, *Collected Poems*. By permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers.



### *Coming-of-Age in Our Time*

He never told us what he was,  
Or what mischance, or other cause,  
Had banished him from better days  
To play the Prince of Castaways.  
Meanwhile he played surpassing well  
A part, for most, unplayable;  
In fine, one pauses, half afraid  
To say for certain that he played.

For that, one may as well forego  
Conviction as to yes or no;  
Nor can I say just how intense  
Would then have been the difference  
To several, who, having striven  
In vain to get what he was given,  
Would see the stranger taken on  
By friends not easy to be won.

Moreover, many a malcontent  
He soothed and found munificent;  
His courtesy beguiled and foiled  
Suspicion that his years were soiled;  
His mien distinguished any crowd,  
His credit strengthened when he bowed;  
And women, young and old, were fond  
Of looking at the man Flammonde.

There was a woman in our town  
On whom the fashion was to frown;  
But while our talk renewed the tinge  
Of a long-faded scarlet fringe,  
The man Flammonde saw none of that,  
And what he saw we wondered at—  
That none of us, in her distress,  
Could hide or find our littleness.

There was a boy that all agreed  
Had shut within him the rare seed  
Of learning. We could understand,  
But none of us could lift a hand.  
The man Flammonde appraised the youth,  
And told a few of us the truth;  
And thereby, for a little gold,  
A flowered future was unrolled.

There were two citizens who fought  
For years and years, and over nought;  
They made life awkward for their friends,  
And shortened their own dividends.  
The man Flammonde said what was  
wrong  
Should be made right; nor was it long  
Before they were again in line,  
And had each other in to dine.

And these I mention are but four  
Of many out of many more.  
So much for them. But what of him—  
So firm in every look and limb?  
What small satanic sort of kink  
Was in his brain? What broken link  
Withheld him from the destinies  
That came so near to being his?

What was he, when we came to sift  
His meaning, and to note the drift  
Of incommunicable ways  
That make us ponder while we praise?  
Why was it that his charm revealed  
Somehow the surface of a shield?  
What was it that we never caught?  
What was he, and what was he not?

How much it was of him we met  
We cannot ever know; nor yet  
Shall all he gave us quite atone  
For what was his, and his alone;  
Nor need we now, since he knew best,  
Nourish an ethical unrest:  
Rarely at once will nature give  
The power to be Flammonde and live.

We cannot know how much we learn  
From those who never will return,  
Until a flash of unforeseen  
Remembrance falls on what has been.  
We've each a darkening hill to climb;  
And this is why, from time to time  
In Tilbury Town, we look beyond  
Horizons for the man Flammonde.

## THE HARNESS

by JOHN STEINBECK

PETER RANDALL was one of the most highly respected farmers of Monterey County. Once, before he was to make a little speech at a Masonic convention, the brother who introduced him referred to him as an example for young Masons of California to emulate. He was nearing fifty; his manner was grave and restrained, and he wore a carefully tended beard. From every gathering he reaped the authority that belongs to the bearded man. Peter's eyes were grave, too; blue and grave almost to the point of sorrowfulness. People knew there was force in him, but force held caged. Sometimes, for no apparent reason, his eyes grew sullen and mean, like the eyes of a bad dog; but that look soon passed, and the restraint and probity came back into his face. He was tall and broad. He held his shoulders back as though they were braced, and he sucked in his stomach like a soldier. Inasmuch as farmers are usually slouchy men, Peter gained an added respect because of his posture.

Concerning Peter's wife, Emma, people generally agreed that it was hard to see how such a little skin-and-bones woman could go on living, particularly when she was sick most of the time. She weighed eighty-seven pounds. At forty-five, her face was as wrinkled and brown as that of an old, old woman, but her dark eyes were feverish with a determination to live. She was a proud woman, who complained very little. Her father had been a thirty-third degree Mason and Worshipful Master of the Grand Lodge of California. Be-

fore he died he had taken a great deal of interest in Peter's Masonic career.

Once a year Peter went away for a week, leaving his wife alone on the farm. To neighbors who called to keep her company she invariably explained, "He's away on a business trip."

Each time Peter returned from a business trip, Emma was ailing for a month or two, and this was hard on Peter, for Emma did her own work and refused to hire a girl. When she was ill, Peter had to do the housework.

The Randall ranch lay across the Salinas River, next to the foothills. It was an ideal balance of bottom and upland. Forty-five acres of rich level soil brought from the cream of the county by the river in old times and spread out as flat as a board; and eighty acres of gentle upland for hay and orchard. The white farmhouse was as neat and restrained as its owners. The immediate yard was fenced, and in the garden, under Emma's direction, Peter raised button dahlias and immortelles, carnations and pinks.

From the front porch one could look down over the flat to the river with its sheath of willows and cottonwoods, and across the river to the beet fields, and past the fields to the bulbous dome of the Salinas courthouse. Often in the afternoon Emma sat in a rocking-chair on the front porch, until the breeze drove her in. She knitted constantly, looking up now and then to watch Peter working on the flat or in the orchard, or on the slope below the house.

From *The Long Valley* by John Steinbeck. Copyright 1937, 1938 by John Steinbeck. By permission of the Viking Press, Inc., New York.

## *Coming-of-Age in Our Time*

The Randall ranch was no more encumbered with mortgage than any of the others in the valley. The crops, judiciously chosen and carefully tended, paid the interest, made a reasonable living and left a few hundred dollars every year toward paying off the principal. It was no wonder that Peter Randall was respected by his neighbors, and that his seldom spoken words were given attention even when they were about the weather or the way things were going. Let Peter say, "I'm going to kill a pig Saturday," and nearly every one of his hearers went home and killed a pig on Saturday. They didn't know why, but if Peter Randall was going to kill a pig, it seemed like a good, safe, conservative thing to do.

Peter and Emma were married for twenty-one years. They collected a houseful of good furniture, a number of framed pictures, vases of all shapes, and books of a sturdy type. Emma had no children. The house was unscarred, uncarved, unchalked. On the front and back porches footscrapers and thick cocoa-fiber mats kept dirt out of the house.

In the intervals between her illnesses, Emma saw to it that the house was kept up. The hinges of doors and cupboards were oiled, and no screws were gone from the catches. The furniture and woodwork were freshly varnished once a year. Repairs were usually made after Peter came home from his yearly business trips.

Whenever the word went around among the farms that Emma was sick again, the neighbors waylaid the doctor as he drove by on the river road.

"Oh, I guess she'll be all right," he answered their questions. "She'll have to stay in bed for a couple of weeks."

The good neighbors took cakes to the Randall farm, and they tiptoed into the sickroom, where the little skinny bird of a

woman lay in a tremendous walnut bed. She looked at them with her bright little dark eyes.

"Wouldn't you like the curtains up a little, dear?" they asked.

"No, thank you. The light worries my eyes."

"Is there anything we can do for you?"

"No, thank you. Peter does for me very well."

"Just remember, if there's anything you think of—"

Emma was such a tight woman. There was nothing you could do for her when she was ill, except to take pies and cakes to Peter. Peter would be in the kitchen, wearing a neat, clean apron. He would be filling a hot water bottle or making junket.

And so, one fall, when the news traveled that Emma was down, the farmwives baked for Peter and prepared to make their usual visits.

Mrs. Chappell, the next farm neighbor, stood on the river road when the doctor drove by. "How's Emma Randall, doctor?"

"I don't think she's so very well, Mrs. Chappell. I think she's a pretty sick woman."

Because to Dr. Marn anyone who wasn't actually a corpse was well on the road to recovery, the word went about among the farms that Emma Randall was going to die.

It was a long, terrible illness. Peter himself gave enemas and carried bedpans. The doctor's suggestion that a nurse be employed met only beady, fierce refusal in the eyes of the patient; and, ill as she was, her demands were respected. Peter fed her and bathed her, and made up the great walnut bed. The bedroom curtains remained drawn.

It was two months before the dark,

sharp bird eyes veiled and the sharp mind retired into unconsciousness. And only then did a nurse come to the house. Peter was lean and sick himself, not far from collapse. The neighbors brought him cakes and pies, and found them uneaten in the kitchen when they called again.

Mrs. Chappell was in the house with Peter the afternoon Emma died. Peter became hysterical immediately. Mrs. Chappell telephoned the doctor, and then she called her husband to come and help her, for Peter was wailing like a crazy man, and beating his bearded cheeks with his fists. Ed Chappell was ashamed when he saw him.

Peter's beard, was wet with his tears. His loud sobbing could be heard throughout the house. Sometimes he sat by the bed and covered his head with a pillow, and sometimes he paced the floor of the bedroom bellowing like a calf. When Ed Chappell self-consciously put a hand on his shoulder and said "Come on, Peter, come on, now," in a helpless voice, Peter shook his hand off. The doctor drove out and signed the certificate.

When the undertaker came, they had a devil of a time with Peter. He was half mad. He fought them when they tried to take the body away. It was only after Ed Chappell and the undertaker held him down while the doctor stuck him with a hypodermic, that they were able to remove Emma.

The morphine didn't put Peter to sleep. He sat hunched in the corner, breathing heavily and staring at the floor.

"Who's going to stay with him?" the doctor asked. "Miss Jack?" to the nurse.

"I couldn't handle him, doctor, not alone."

"Will you stay, Chappell?"

"Sure, I'll stay."

"Well, look. Here are some triple bro-

mides. If he gets going again, give him one of these. And if they don't work, here's some sodium amytal. One of these capsules will calm him down."

Before they went away, they helped the stupefied Peter into the sitting-room and laid him gently down on a sofa. Ed Chappell sat in an easy-chair and watched him. The bromides and a glass of water were on the table beside him.

The little sitting-room was clean and dusted. Only that morning Peter had swept the floor with pieces of damp newspaper. Ed built a little fire in the grate, and put on a couple of pieces of oak when the flames were well started. The dark had come early. A light rain spattered against the windows when the wind drove it. Ed trimmed the kerosene lamps and turned the flames low. In the grate the blaze snapped and crackled and the flames curled like hair over the oak. For a long time Ed sat in his easy-chair watching Peter where he lay drugged on the couch. At last Ed dozed off to sleep.

It was about ten o'clock when he awakened. He started up and looked toward the sofa. Peter was sitting up, looking at him. Ed's hand went out toward the bromide bottle, but Peter shook his head.

"No need to give me anything, Ed. I guess the doctor slugged me pretty hard, didn't he? I feel all right now, only a little dopey."

"If you'll just take one of these, you'll get some sleep."

"I don't want sleep." He fingered his dragged beard and then stood up. "I'll go out and wash my face, then I'll feel better."

Ed heard him running water in the kitchen. In a moment he came back into the living-room, still drying his face on a towel. Peter was smiling curiously. It was an expression Ed had never seen on him before, a quizzical, wondering smile. "I

## *Coming-of-Age in Our Time*

guess I kind of broke loose when she died, didn't I?" Peter said.

"Well—yes, you carried on some."

"It seemed like something snapped inside of me," Peter explained. "Something like a suspender strap. It made me all come apart. I'm all right, now, though."

Ed looked down at the floor and saw a little brown spider crawling, and stretched out his foot and stomped it.

Peter asked suddenly, "Do you believe in an after-life?"

Ed Chappell squirmed. He didn't like to talk about such things, for to talk about them was to bring them up in his mind and think about them. "Well, yes. I suppose if you come right down to it, I do."

"Do you believe that somebody that's—passed—on—can look down and see what we're doing?"

"Oh, I don't know as I'd go that far—I don't know."

Peter went on as though he were talking to himself. "Even if she could see me, and I didn't do what she wanted, she ought to feel good because I did it when she was here. It ought to please her that she made a good man of me. If I wasn't a good man when she wasn't here, that'd prove she did it all, wouldn't it? I was a good man, wasn't I, Ed?"

"What do you mean, 'was'?"

"Well, except for one week a year I was good. I don't know what I'll do now. . . ." His face grew angry. "Except one thing." He stood up and stripped off his coat and his shirt. Over his underwear there was a web harness that pulled his shoulders back. He unhooked the harness and threw it off. Then he dropped his trousers, disclosing a wide elastic belt. He shucked this off over his feet, and then he scratched his stomach luxuriously before he put on his clothes again. He smiled at Ed, the strange, wondering smile, again. "I don't

know how she got me to do things, but she did. She didn't seem to boss me, but she always made me do things. You know, I don't think I believe in an after-life. When she was alive, even when she was sick, I had to do things she wanted, but just the minute she died, it was—why like that harness coming off! I couldn't stand it. It was all over. I'm going to have to get used to going without that harness." He shook his finger in Ed's direction. "My stomach's going to stick out," he said positively. "I'm going to let it stick out. Why, I'm fifty years old."

Ed didn't like that. He wanted to get away. This sort of thing wasn't very decent. "If you'll just take one of these, you'll get some sleep," he said weakly.

Peter had not put his coat on. He was sitting on the sofa in an open shirt. "I don't want to sleep. I want to talk. I guess I'll have to put that belt and harness on for the funeral, but after that I'm going to burn them. Listen, I've got a bottle of whiskey in the barn. I'll go get it."

"Oh, no," Ed protested quickly. "I couldn't drink, not at a time like this."

Peter stood up. "Well, I could. You can sit and watch me if you want. I tell you, it's all over." He went out the door, leaving Ed Chappell unhappy and scandalized. It was only a moment before he was back. He started talking as he came through the doorway with the whiskey. "I only got one thing in my life, those trips. Emma was a pretty bright woman. She knew I'd've gone crazy if I didn't get away once a year. God, how she worked on my conscience when I came back!" His voice lowered confidentially. "You know what I did on those trips?"

Ed's eyes were wide open now. Here was a man he didn't know, and he was becoming fascinated. He took the glass of

whiskey when it was handed to him. "No, what did you do?"

Peter gulped his drink and coughed, and wiped his mouth with his hand. "I got drunk," he said. "I went to fancy houses in San Francisco. I was drunk for a week, and I went to a fancy house every night." He poured his glass full again. "I guess Emma knew, but she never said anything. I'd've busted if I hadn't got away,"

Ed Chappell sipped his whiskey gingerly. "She always said you went on business."

Peter looked at his glass and drank it, and poured it full again. His eyes had begun to shine. "Drink your drink, Ed. I know you think it isn't right—so soon, but no one'll know but you and me. Kick up the fire. I'm not sad."

Chappell went to the grate and stirred the glowing wood until lots of sparks flew up the chimney like little shining birds. Peter filled the glasses and retired to the sofa again. When Ed went back to the chair he sipped from his glass and pretended he didn't know it was filled up. His cheeks were flushing. It didn't seem so terrible, now, to be drinking. The afternoon and the death had receded into an indefinite past.

"Want some cake?" Peter asked. "There's half a dozen cakes in the pantry."

"No, I don't think I will thank you for some."

"You know," Peter confessed, "I don't think I'll eat cake again. For ten years, every time Emma was sick, people sent cakes. It was nice of 'em, of course, only now cake means sickness to me. Drink your drink."

Something happened in the room. Both men looked up, trying to discover what it was. The room was somehow different than it had been a moment before. Then Peter smiled sheepishly. "It was that man-

tel clock stopped. I don't think I'll start it any more. I'll get a little quick alarm clock that ticks fast. That clack-clack-clack is too mournful." He swallowed his whiskey. "I guess you'll be telling around that I'm crazy, won't you?"

Ed looked up from his glass, and smiled and nodded. "No, I will not. I can see pretty much how you feel about things. I didn't know you wore that harness and belt."

"A man ought to stand up straight," Peter said. "I'm a natural sloucher." Then he exploded: "I'm a natural fool! For twenty years I've been pretending I was a wise, good man—except for that one week a year." He said loudly, "Things have been dribbled to me. My life's been dribbled out to me. Here, let me fill your glass. I've got another bottle out in the barn, way down under a pile of sacks."

Ed held out his glass to be filled. Peter went on, "I thought how it would be nice to have my whole river flat in sweet peas. Think how it'd be to sit on the front porch and see all those acres of blue and pink, just solid. And when the wind came up over them, think of the big smell. A big smell that would almost knock you over."

"A lot of men have gone broke on sweet peas. 'Course you get a big price for the seed, but too many things can happen to your crop."

"I don't give a damn," Peter shouted. "I want a lot of everything. I want forty acres of color and smell. I want fat women, with breasts as big as pillows. I'm hungry, I tell you, I'm hungry for everything, for a lot of everything."

Ed's face became grave under the shouting. "If you'd just take one of these, you'd get some sleep."

Peter looked ashamed. "I'm all right. I didn't mean to yell like that. I'm not just thinking these things for the first time. I

### *Coming-of-Age in Our Time*

been thinking about them for years, the way a kid thinks of vacation. I was always afraid I'd be too old. Or that I'd go first and miss everything. But I'm fifty, I've got plenty of vinegar left. I told Emma about the sweet peas, but she wouldn't let me. I don't know how she made me do things," he said wonderingly. "I can't remember. She had a way of doing it. But she's gone. I can feel she's gone just like that harness is gone. I'm going to slouch, Ed—slouch all over the place. I'm going to track dirt into the house. I'm going to get a big fat housekeeper—a big fat one from San Francisco. I'm going to have a bottle of brandy on the shelf all the time."

Ed Chappell stood up and stretched his arms over his head. "I guess I'll go home now, if you feel all right. I got to get some sleep. You better wind that clock, Peter. It don't do a clock any good to stand not running."

The day after the funeral Peter Randall went to work on his farm. The Chappells, who lived on the next place, saw the lamp in his kitchen long before daylight, and they saw his lantern cross the yard to the barn half an hour before they even got up.

Peter pruned his orchard in three days. He worked from first light until he couldn't see the twigs against the sky any more. Then he started to shape the big piece of river flat. He plowed and rolled and harrowed. Two strange men dressed in boots and riding breeches came out and looked at his land. They felt the dirt with their fingers and ran a post-hole digger deep down under the surface, and when they went away they took little paper bags of the dirt with them.

Ordinarily, before planting time, the farmers did a good deal of visiting back and forth. They sat on their haunches, picking up handfuls of dirt and breaking little clods between their fingers. They dis-

cussed markets and crops, recalled other years when beans had done well in a good market, and other years when field peas didn't bring enough to pay for the seed hardly. After a great number of these discussions it usually happened that all the farmers planted the same things. There were certain men whose ideas carried weight. If Peter Randall or Clark DeWitt thought they would put in pink beans and barley, most of the crops would turn out to be pink beans and barley that year; for, since such men were respected and fairly successful, it was conceded that their plans must be based on something besides chance choice. It was generally believed but never stated that Peter Randall and Clark DeWitt had extra reasoning powers and special prophetic knowledge.

When the usual visits started, it was seen that a change had taken place in Peter Randall. He sat on his plow and talked pleasantly enough. He said he hadn't decided yet what to plant, but he said it in such a guilty way that it was plain he didn't intend to tell. When he had rebuffed a few inquiries, the visits to his place stopped and the farmers went over in a body to Clark DeWitt. Clark was putting in Chevalier barley. His decision dictated the major part of the planting in the vicinity.

But because the questions stopped, the interest did not. Men driving by the forty-five-acre flat of the Randall place studied the field to try to figure out from the type of work what the crop was going to be. When Peter drove the seeder back and forth across the land no one came in, for Peter had made it plain that his crop was a secret.

Ed Chappell didn't tell on him, either. Ed was a little ashamed when he thought of that night; ashamed of Peter for breaking down, and ashamed of himself for

having sat there and listened. He watched Peter narrowly to see whether his vicious intentions were really there or whether the whole conversation had been the result of loss and hysteria. He did notice that Peter's shoulders weren't back and that his stomach stuck out a little. He went to Peter's house and was relieved when he saw no dirt on the floor and when he heard the mantel clock ticking away.

Mrs. Chappell spoke often of the afternoon. "You'd've thought he lost his mind the way he carried on. He just howled. Ed stayed with him part of the night, until he quieted down. Ed had to give him some whiskey to get him to sleep. But," she said brightly, "hard work is the thing to kill sorrow. Peter Randall is getting up at three o'clock every morning. I can see the light in his kitchen window from my bedroom."

The pussywillows burst out in silver drops, and the little weeds sprouted up along the roadside. The Salinas River ran dark water, flowed for a month, and then subsided into green pools again. Peter Randall had shaped his land beautifully. It was smooth and black; no clod was larger than a small marble, and under the rains it looked purple with richness.

And then the little weak lines of green stretched out across the black field. In the dusk a neighbor crawled under the fence and pulled one of the tiny plants. "Some kind of legun," he told his friends. "Field peas, I guess. What did he want to be so quiet about it for? I asked him right out what he was planting, and he wouldn't tell me."

The word ran through the farms, "It's sweet peas. The whole God-damn' forty-five acres is in sweet peas!" Men called on Clark DeWitt then, to get his opinion.

His opinion was this: "People think because you can get twenty to sixty cents a

pound for sweet peas you can get rich on them. But it's the most ticklish crop in the world. If the bugs don't get it, it might do good. And then come a hot day and bust the pods and lose your crop on the ground. Or it might come up a little rain and spoil the whole kaboodle. It's all right to put in a few acres and take a chance, but not the whole place. Peter's touched in the head since Emma died."

This opinion was widely distributed. Every man used it as his own. Two neighbors often said it to each other, each one repeating half of it. When too many people said it to Peter Randall he became angry. One day he cried, "Say, whose land is this? If I want to go broke, I've got a damn good right to, haven't I?" And that changed the whole feeling. Men remembered that Peter was a good farmer. Perhaps he had special knowledge. Why, that's who those two men in boots were—soil chemists! A good many of the farmers wished they'd put in a few acres of sweet peas.

They wished it particularly when the vines spread out, when they met each other across the rows and hid the dark earth from sight, when the buds began to form and it was seen the crop was rich. And then the blooms came; forty-five acres of color, forty-five acres of perfume. It was said that you could smell them in Salinas, four miles away. Busses brought the school children out to look at them. A group of men from a seed company spent all day looking at the vines and feeling the earth.

Peter Randall sat on his porch in a rocking-chair every afternoon. He looked down on the great squares of pink and blue, and on the mad square of mixed colors. When the afternoon breeze came up, he inhaled deeply. His blue shirt was open at the



## *Coming-of-Age in Our Time*

throat, as though he wanted to get the perfume down next his skin.

Men called on Clark DeWitt to get his opinion now. He said, "There's about ten things that can happen to spoil that crop. He's welcome to his sweet peas." But the men knew from Clark's irritation that he was a little jealous. They looked up over the fields of color to where Peter sat on his porch, and they felt a new admiration and respect for him.

Ed Chappell walked up the steps to him one afternoon. "You got a crop there, mister."

"Looks that way," said Peter.

"I took a look. Pods are setting fine."

Peter sighed. "Blooming's nearly over," he said. "I'll hate to see the petals drop off."

"Well, I'd be glad to see 'em drop. You'll make a lot of money, if nothing happens."

Peter took out a bandana handkerchief and wiped his nose and jiggled it sideways to stop an itch. "I'll be sorry when the smell stops," he said.

Then Ed made his reference to the night of the death. One of his eyes drooped secretly. "Found somebody to keep house for you?"

"I haven't looked," said Peter. "I haven't had time." There were lines of worry about his eyes. But who wouldn't worry, Ed thought, when a single shower could ruin his whole year's crop.

If the year and the weather had been manufactured for sweet peas, they couldn't have been better. The fog lay close to the ground in the mornings when the vines were pulled. When the great piles of vines lay safely on spread canvases, the hot sun shone down and crisped the pods for the threshers. The neighbors watched the long cotton sacks filling with round black seeds, and they went home and tried to figure

out how much money Peter would make on his tremendous crop. Clark DeWitt lost a good part of his following. The men decided to find out what Peter was going to plant next year if they had to follow him around. How did he know, for instance, that this year'd be good for sweet peas? He must have some kind of special knowledge.

When a man from the upper Salinas Valley goes to San Francisco on business or for a vacation, he takes a room in the Romano Hotel. This is a nice arrangement, for in the lobby he can usually find someone from home. They can sit in the soft chairs of the lobby and talk about the Salinas Valley.

Ed Chappell went to San Francisco to meet his wife's cousin who was coming out from Ohio for a trip. The train was not due until the next morning. In the lobby of the Romano, Ed looked for someone from the Salinas Valley, but he could see only strangers sitting in the soft chairs. He went out to a moving picture show. When he returned, he looked again for someone from home, and still there were only strangers. For a moment he considered glancing over the register, but it was quite late. He sat down to finish his cigar before he went to bed.

There was a commotion at the door. Ed saw the clerk motion with his hand. A bellhop ran out. Ed squirmed around in his chair to look. Outside a man was being helped out of a taxicab. The bellhop took him from the driver and guided him in the door. It was Peter Randall. His eyes were glassy, and his mouth open and wet. He had no hat on his mussed hair. Ed jumped up and strode over to him.

"Peter!"

Peter was batting helplessly at the bellhop. "Let me alone," he explained. "I'm

## *The Secret Life of Walter Mitty*

all right. You let me alone, and I'll give you two bits."

Ed called again, "Peter!"

The glassy eyes turned slowly to him, and then Peter fell into his arms. "My old friend," he cried. "Ed Chappell, my old, good friend. What you doing here? Come up to my room and have a drink."

Ed set him back on his feet. "Sure I will," he said. "I'd like a little night-cap."

"Night-cap, hell. We'll go out and see a show, or something."

Ed helped him into the elevator and got him to his room. Peter dropped heavily to the bed and struggled up to a sitting position. "There's a bottle of whiskey in the bathroom. Bring me a drink, too."

Ed brought out the bottle and the glasses. "What you doing, Peter, celebrating the crop? You must've made a pile of money."

Peter put out his palm and tapped it impressively with a forefinger. "Sure I made money—but it wasn't a bit better than gambling. It was just like straight gambling."

"But you got the money."

Peter scowled thoughtfully. "I might've lost my pants," he said. "The whole time, all the year, I been worrying. It was just like gambling."

"Well, you got it, anyway."

Peter changed the subject, then. "I been sick," he said. "I been sick right in the

taxicab. I just came from a fancy house on Van Ness Avenue," he explained apologetically, "I just had to come up to the city. I'd'a busted if I hadn't come up and got some of the vinegar out of my system."

Ed looked at him curiously. Peter's head was hanging loosely between his shoulders. His beard was draggled and rough. "Peter—" Ed began, "the night Emma—passed on, you said you was going to—change things."

Peter's swaying head rose up slowly. He stared owlishly at Ed Chappell. "She didn't die dead," he said thickly. "She won't let me do things. She's worried me all year about those peas." His eyes were wondering. "I don't know how she does it." Then he frowned. His palm came out, and he tapped it again. "But you mark, Ed Chappell, I won't wear that harness, and I damn well won't ever wear it. You remember that." His head dropped forward again. But in a moment he looked up. "I been drunk," he said seriously. "I been to fancy houses." He edged out confidentially toward Ed. His voice dropped to a heavy whisper. "But it's all right, I'll fix it. When I get back, you know what I'm going to do? I'm going to put in electric lights. Emma always wanted electric lights." He sagged sideways on the bed.

Ed Chappell stretched Peter out and undressed him before he went to his own room.

## THE SECRET LIFE OF WALTER MITTY

by JAMES THURBER

"WE'RE GOING THROUGH!" The Commander's voice was like thin ice breaking. He wore his full-dress uniform, with the heav-

ily braided white cap pulled down rakishly over one cold gray eye. "We can't make it, sir. It's spoiling for a hur-

From *My World—and Welcome to It*, copyright, 1942, by James Thurber. By permission of Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc. Originally appeared in *The New Yorker*.

ricane, if you ask me." "I'm not asking you, Lieutenant Berg," said the Commander. "Throw on the power lights! Rev her up to 8,500! We're going through!" The pounding of the cylinders increased: ta-pocketa-pocketa-pocketa-pocketa-pocketa. The Commander stared at the ice forming on the pilot window. He walked over and twisted a row of complicated dials. "Switch on No. 8 auxiliary!" he shouted. "Switch on No. 8 auxiliary!" repeated Lieutenant Berg. "Full strength in No. 3 turret!" shouted the Commander. "Full strength in No. 3 turret!" The crew, bending to their various tasks in the huge, hurtling eight-engined Navy hydroplane, looked at each other and grinned. "The Old Man'll get us through," they said to one another. "The Old Man ain't afraid of Hell!" . . .

"Not so fast! You're driving too fast!" said Mrs. Mitty. "What are you driving so fast for?"

"Hmm?" said Walter Mitty. He looked at his wife, in the seat beside him, with shocked astonishment. She seemed grossly unfamiliar, like a strange woman who had yelled at him in a crowd. "You were up to fifty-five," she said. "You know I don't like to go more than forty. You were up to fifty-five." Walter Mitty drove on toward Waterbury in silence, the roaring of the SN202 through the worst storm in twenty years of Navy flying fading in the remote, intimate airways of his mind. "You're tensed up again," said Mrs. Mitty. "It's one of your days. I wish you'd let Dr. Renshaw look you over."

Walter Mitty stopped the car in front of the building where his wife went to have her hair done. "Remember to get those overshoes while I'm having my hair done," she said. "I don't need overshoes," said Mitty. She put her mirror back into her bag. "We've been all through that,"

she said, getting out of the car. "You're not a young man any longer." He raced the engine a little. "Why don't you wear your gloves? Have you lost your gloves?" Walter Mitty reached in a pocket and brought out the gloves. He put them on, but after she had turned and gone into the building and he had driven on to a red light, he took them off again. "Pick it up, brother!" snapped a cop as the light changed, and Mitty hastily pulled on his gloves and lurched ahead. He drove around the streets aimlessly for a time, and then he drove past the hospital on his way to the parking lot.

. . . "It's the millionaire banker, Wellington McMillan," said the pretty nurse. "Yes?" said Walter Mitty, removing his gloves slowly. "Who has the case?" "Dr. Renshaw and Dr. Benbow, but there are two specialists here, Dr. Remington from New York and Dr. Pritchard-Mitford from London. He flew over." A door opened down a long, cool corridor and Dr. Renshaw came out. He looked distraught and haggard. "Hello, Mitty," he said. "We're having the devil's own time with McMillan, the millionaire banker and close personal friend of Roosevelt. Obstrosis of the ductal tract. Tertiary. Wish you'd take a look at him." "Glad to," said Mitty.

In the operating room there were whispered introductions: "Dr. Remington, Dr. Mitty, Dr. Pritchard-Mitford, Dr. Mitty." "I've read your book on streptothricosis," said Pritchard-Mitford, shaking hands. "A brilliant performance, sir." "Thank you," said Walter Mitty. "Didn't know you were in the States, Mitty," grumbled Remington. "Coals to Newcastle, bringing Mitford and me up here for a tertiary." "You are very kind," said Mitty. A huge, complicated machine, connected to the operating table, with many tubes and wires,

## *The Secret Life of Walter Mitty*

began at this moment to go pocketa-pocketa-pocketa. "The new anesthetizer is giving way!" shouted an interne. "There is no one in the East who knows how to fix it!" "Quiet, man!" said Mitty, in a low, cool voice. He sprang to the machine, which was now going pocketa-pocketa-queep-pocketa-queep. He began fingering delicately a row of glistening dials. "Give me a fountain pen!" he snapped. Someone handed him a fountain pen. He pulled a faulty piston out of the machine and inserted the pen in its place. "That will hold for ten minutes," he said. "Get on with the operation." A nurse hurried over and whispered to Renshaw, and Mitty saw the man turn pale. "Coreopsis has set in," said Renshaw nervously. "If you would take over, Mitty?" Mitty looked at him and at the craven figure of Benbow, who drank, and at the grave, uncertain faces of the two great specialists. "If you wish," he said. They slipped a white gown on him; he adjusted a mask and drew on thin gloves; nurses handed him shining . . .

"Back it up, Mac! Look out for that Buick!" Walter Mitty jammed on the brakes. "Wrong lane, Mac," said the parking-lot attendant, looking at Mitty closely. "Gee. Yeh," muttered Mitty. He began cautiously to back out of the lane marked "Exit Only." "Leave her sit there," said the attendant. "I'll put her away." Mitty got out of the car. "Hey, better leave the key." "Oh," said Mitty, handing the man the ignition key. The attendant vaulted into the car, backed it up with insolent skill, and put it where it belonged.

They're so damn cocky, thought Walter Mitty, walking along Main Street; they think they know everything. Once he had tried to take his chains off, outside New Milford, and he had got them wound around the axles. A man had had to come out in a wrecking car and unwind them,

a young, grinning garageman. Since then Mrs. Mitty always made him drive to a garage to have the chains taken off. The next time, he thought, I'll wear my right arm in a sling; they won't grin at me then. I'll have my right arm in a sling and they'll see I couldn't possibly take the chains off myself. He kicked at the slush on the sidewalk. "Overshoes," he said to himself, and he began looking for a shoe store.

When he came out into the street again, with the overshoes in a box under his arm, Walter Mitty began to wonder what the other thing was his wife had told him to get. She had told him twice before they set out from their house for Waterbury. In a way he hated these weekly trips to town—he was always getting something wrong. Kleenex, he thought, Squibb's, razor blades? No. Toothpaste, toothbrush, bicarbonate, carborundum, initiative and referendum? He gave it up. But she would remember it. "Where's the what's-its-name?" she would ask. "Don't tell me you forgot the what's-its-name." A newsboy went by shouting something about the Waterbury trial.

. . . "Perhaps this will refresh your memory." The District Attorney suddenly thrust a heavy automatic at the quiet figure on the witness stand. "Have you ever seen this before?" Walter Mitty took the gun and examined it expertly. "This is my Webley-Vickers 50.80," he said calmly. An excited buzz ran around the courtroom. The Judge rapped for order. "You are a crack shot with any sort of firearms, I believe?" said the District Attorney, insinuatingly. "Objection!" shouted Mitty's attorney. "We have shown that the defendant could not have fired the shot. We have shown that he wore his right arm in a sling on the night of the fourteenth of July." Walter Mitty raised his hand briefly

and the bickering attorneys were stilled. "With any known make of gun," he said evenly, "I could have killed Gregory Fitzhurst at three hundred feet *with my left hand*." Pandemonium broke loose in the courtroom. A woman's scream rose above the bedlam and suddenly a lovely, dark-haired girl was in Walter Mitty's arms. The District Attorney struck at her savagely. Without rising from his chair, Mitty let the man have it on the point of the chin. "You miserable curl!" . . .

"Puppy biscuit," said Walter Mitty. He stopped walking and the buildings of Waterbury rose up out of the misty courtroom and surrounded him again. A woman who was passing laughed. "He said 'Puppy biscuit,'" she said to her companion. "That man said 'Puppy biscuit' to himself." Walter Mitty hurried on. He went into an A. & P., not the first one he came to but a smaller one farther up the street. "I want some biscuit for small, young dogs," he said to the clerk. "Any special brand, sir?" The greatest pistol shot in the world thought a moment. "It says 'Puppies Bark for It' on the box," said Walter Mitty.

His wife would be through at the hairdresser's in fifteen minutes, Mitty saw in looking at his watch, unless they had trouble drying it; sometimes they had trouble drying it. She didn't like to get to the hotel first; she would want him to be there waiting for her as usual. He found a big leather chair in the lobby, facing a window, and he put the overshoes and the puppy biscuit on the floor beside it. He picked up an old copy of *Liberty* and sank down into the chair. "Can Germany Conquer the World Through the Air?" Walter Mitty looked at the pictures of bombing planes and of ruined streets.

. . . "The cannonading has got the

wind up in young Raleigh, sir," said the sergeant. Captain Mitty looked up at him through tousled hair. "Get him to bed," he said wearily, "with the others. I'll fly alone." "But you can't, sir," said the sergeant anxiously. "It takes two men to handle that bomber and the Archies are pounding hell out of the air. Von Richtman's circus is between here and Saulier." "Somebody's got to get that ammunition dump," said Mitty. "I'm going over. Spot of brandy?" He poured a drink for the sergeant and one for himself. War thundered and whined around the dugout and battered at the door. There was a rending of wood, and splinters flew through the room. "A bit of a near thing," said Captain Mitty carelessly. "The box barrage is closing in," said the sergeant. "We only live once, Sergeant," said Mitty, with his faint, fleeting smile. "Or do we?" He poured another brandy and tossed it off. "I never see a man could hold his brandy like you, sir," said the sergeant. "Begging your pardon, sir." Captain Mitty stood up and strapped on his huge Webley-Vickers automatic. "It's forty kilometers through hell, sir," said the sergeant. Mitty finished one last brandy. "After all," he said softly, "what isn't?" The pounding of the cannon increased; there was the rat-tat-tatting of machine guns, and from somewhere came the menacing pocketa-pocketa-pocketa of the new flame-throwers. Walter Mitty walked to the door of the dugout humming "Auprès de Ma Blonde." He turned and waved to the sergeant. "Cheerio!" he said. . . .

Something struck his shoulder. "I've been looking all over this hotel for you," said Mrs. Mitty. "Why do you have to hide in this old chair? How did you expect me to find you?" "Things close in," said Walter Mitty vaguely. "What?" Mrs. Mitty said. "Did you get the what's-its-

## *The Secret Life of Walter Mitty*

name? The puppy biscuit? What's in that box?" "Overshoes," said Mitty. "Couldn't you have put them on in the store?" "I was thinking," said Walter Mitty. "Does it ever occur to you that I am sometimes thinking?" She looked at him. "I'm going to take your temperature when I get you home," she said.

They went out through the revolving doors that made a faintly derisive whistling sound when you pushed them. It was two blocks to the parking lot. At the drugstore on the corner she said, "Wait here for me. I forgot something. I won't

be a minute." She was more than a minute. Walter Mitty lighted a cigarette. It began, to rain, rain with sleet in it. He stood up against the wall of the drugstore, smoking. . . . He put his shoulders back and his heels together. "To hell with the handkerchief," said Walter Mitty scornfully. He took one last drag on his cigarette and snapped it away. Then, with that faint, fleeting smile playing about his lips, he faced the firing squad; erect and motionless, proud and disdainful, Walter Mitty the Undefeated, inscrutable to the last.



### *Home*

*From Men, Women and Dogs, copyright, 1943, by James Thurber. By permission of Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc. Originally appeared in The New Yorker.*

*"Ed Ricketts says that when he was little he was in trouble all the time until he suddenly realized that adults were crazy. Then, when he knew that, everything was all right and he could be nice to them. He says he has never found occasion to revise that opinion."*

*—from a letter by JOHN STEINBECK.*

From *The Portable Steinbeck*. Copyright 1943, 1945 by John Steinbeck. By permission of The Viking Press, Inc., New York.

## ON GROWING OLD

by JOHN MASEFIELD

Be with me Beauty for the fire is dying,  
My dog and I are old, too old for roving,  
Man, whose young passion sets the spindrift flying  
Is soon too lame to march, too cold for loving.

I take the book and gather to the fire,  
Turning old yellow leaves; minute by minute,  
The clock ticks to my heart; a withered wire  
Moves a thin ghost of music in the spinet.

I cannot sail your seas, I cannot wander,  
Your cornland, nor your hill-land nor your valleys,  
Ever again, nor share the battle yonder  
Where the young knight the broken squadron rallies.

Only stay quiet while my mind remembers  
The beauty of fire from the beauty of embers.

Beauty, have pity, for the strong have power  
The rich their wealth, the beautiful their grace  
Summer of man its sunlight and its flower  
Spring time of man all April in a face.

Only, as in the jostling in the Strand,  
Where the mob thrusts or loiters or is loud  
The beggar with the saucer in his hand  
Asks only a penny from the passing crowd,

So, from this glittering world with all its fashion  
Its fire and play of men, its stir, its march,

From John Masefield, *Poems*. By permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers.

## Mr. Flood's Party

Let me have wisdom, Beauty, wisdom and passion,  
Bread to the soul, rain where the summers parch.

Give me but these, and though the darkness close  
Even the night will blossom as the rose.

### MR. FLOOD'S PARTY

by EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON

Old Eben Flood, climbing alone one night  
Over the hill between the town below  
And the forsaken upland hermitage  
That held as much as he should ever know  
On earth again of home, paused warily.  
The road was his with not a native near;  
And Eben, having leisure, said aloud,  
For no man else in Tilbury Town to hear:

"Well, Mr. Flood, we have the harvest  
moon  
Again, and we may not have many more;  
The bird is on the wing, the poet says,  
And you and I have said it here before.  
Drink to the bird." He raised up to the  
light  
The jug that he had gone so far to fill,  
And answered huskily: "Well, Mr. Flood,  
Since you propose it, I believe I will."

Alone, as if enduring to the end  
A valiant armor of scarred hopes outworn,  
He stood there in the middle of the road  
Like Roland's ghost winding a silent horn.  
Below him, in the town among the trees,  
Where friends of other days had honored  
him,  
A phantom salutation of the dead  
Rang thinly till old Eben's eyes were dim.

Then, as a mother lays her sleeping child  
Down tenderly, fearing it may awake,

He set the jug down slowly at his feet  
With trembling care, knowing that most  
things break;  
And only when assured that on firm earth  
It stood, as the uncertain lives of men  
Assuredly did not, he paced away,  
And with his hand extended paused again:

"Well, Mr. Flood, we have not met like  
this  
In a long time; and many a change has  
come  
To both of us, I fear, since last it was  
We had a drop together. Welcome home!"  
Convivially returning with himself,  
Again he raised the jug up to the light;  
And with an acquiescent quaver said:  
"Well, Mr. Flood, if you insist, I might.

"Only a very little, Mr. Flood—  
For auld lang syne. No more, sir; that  
will do."

So, for the time, apparently it did,  
And Eben evidently thought so too;  
For soon amid the silver loneliness  
Of night he lifted up his voice and sang,  
Secure, with only two moons listening,  
Until the whole harmonious landscape  
rang—

"For auld lang syne." The weary throat  
gave out,

From E. A. Robinson, *Collected Poems*. By permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers.



## *Coming-of-Age in Our Time*

The last word wavered, and the song was done.

He raised again the jug regretfully  
And shook his head, and was again alone.  
There was not much that was ahead of him,

And there was nothing in the town below—

Where strangers would have shut the many doors  
That many friends had opened long ago.

## ULYSSES

*by* ALFRED TENNYSON

It little profits that an idle king,  
By this still hearth, among these barren  
crag,  
Matched with an aged wife, I mete and  
dole  
Unequal laws unto a savage race,  
That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and  
know not me.  
I cannot rest from travel; I will drink  
Life to the lees. All times I have enjoyed  
Greatly, have suffered greatly, both with  
those  
That loved me, and alone; on shore, and  
when  
Thro' scudding drifts the rainy Hyades  
Vext the dim sea. I am become a name;  
For always roaming with a hungry heart  
Much have I seen and known,—cities of  
men  
And manners, climates, councils, govern-  
ments,  
Myself not least, but honored of them  
all,—  
And drunk delight of battle with my peers,  
Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy.  
I am a part of all that I have met;  
Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'  
Gleams that untravelled world, whose  
margin fades  
For ever and for ever when I move.  
How dull it is to pause, to make an end,  
To rust unburnished, not to shine in use!

As tho' to breathe were life! Life piled on  
life

Were all too little, and of one to me  
Little remains; but every hour is saved  
From that eternal silence, something more,  
A bringer of new things; and vile it were  
For some three suns to store and hoard  
myself,

And this gray spirit yearning in desire  
To follow knowledge, like a sinking star,  
Beyond the utmost bound of human  
thought.

This is my son, mine own Telemachus,  
To whom I leave the sceptre and the  
isle,—

Well-loved of me, discerning to fulfil  
This labor, by slow prudence to make mild  
A rugged people, and thro' soft degrees  
Subdue them to the useful and the good,  
Most blameless is he, centred in the sphere  
Of common duties, decent not to fail  
In offices of tenderness, and pay  
Meet adoration to my household gods,  
When I am gone. He works his work, I  
mine.

There lies the port; the vessel puffs her  
sail;  
There gloom the dark, broad seas. My  
mariners,  
Souls that have toiled, and wrought, and  
thought with me,—

That ever with a frolic welcome took

*Ode: Intimations of Immortality*

The thunder and the sunshine, and op- posed Free hearts, free foreheads,—you and I are old; Old age hath yet his honor and his toil. Death closes all; but something ere the end, Some work of noble note, may yet be done, Not unbecoming men that strove with Gods. The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks; The long day wanes; the slow moon climbs; the deep Moans round with many voices. Come, my friends, 'Tis not too late to seek a newer world. Push off, and sitting well in order smite	The sounding furrows; for my purpose holds To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths Of all the western stars, until I die. It may be that the gulfs will wash us down; It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles, And see the great Achilles, whom we knew. Tho' much is taken, much abides; and tho' We are not now that strength which in old days Moved earth and heaven, that which we are, we are,— One equal temper of heroic hearts, Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.
---	---

*from* ODE: INTIMATIONS OF IMMORTALITY

*by* WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:  
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,  
Hath had elsewhere its setting,  
And cometh from afar:  
Not in entire forgetfulness,  
And not in utter nakedness,  
But trailing clouds of glory do we come  
From God, who is our home:  
Heaven lies about us in our infancy!  
Shades of the prison-house begin to close  
Upon the growing Boy,  
But he beholds the light and whence it flows,  
He sees it in his joy;  
The Youth, who daily farthest from the east  
Must travel, still is Nature's priest,  
And by the vision splendid  
Is on his way attended;  
At length the Man perceives it die away,  
And fade into the light of common day.

## ANIMULA

by T. S. ELIOT

"Issues from the hand of God, the simple  
soul"

To a flat world of changing lights and  
noise,

To light, dark, dry or damp, chilly or  
warm;

Moving between the legs of tables and of  
chairs,

Rising or falling, grasping at kisses and  
toys,

Advancing boldly, sudden to take alarm,  
Retreating to the corner of arm and knee,

Eager to be reassured, taking pleasure  
In the fragrant brilliance of the Christmas  
tree,

Pleasure in the wind, the sunlight and the  
sea;

Studies the sunlit pattern on the floor  
And running stags around a silver tray;

Confounds the actual and the fanciful,  
Content with playing-cards and kings and

queens,  
What the fairies do and what the servants

say.  
The heavy burden of the growing soul

Perplexes and offends more, day by day;  
Week by week, offends and perplexes

more

With the imperatives of "is and seems"

And may and may not, desire and control

The pain of living and the drug of dreams

Curl up the small soul in the window seat

Behind the *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

Issues from the hand of time the simple  
soul

Irresolute and selfish, misshapen, lame,

Unable to fare forward or retreat,

Fearing the warm reality, the offered  
good,

Denying the importunity of the blood,

Shadow of its own shadows, specter in its  
own gloom,

Leaving disordered papers in a dusty  
room;

Living first in the silence after the viati-  
cum.

Pray for Guiterriez, avid of speed and  
power,

For Boudin, blown to pieces,

For this one who made a great fortune,

And that one who went his own way.

Pray for Floret, by the boarhound slain  
between the yew trees,

Pray for us now and at the hour of our  
birth.

From *Collected Poems of T. S. Eliot*. Copyright, 1936, by Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc.

## THE LEADEN-EYED

by VACHEL LINDSAY

Let not young souls be smothered out before  
They do quaint deeds and fully flaunt their pride.  
It is the world's one crime its babes grow dull,  
Its poor are ox-like, limp, and leaden eyed.

From Vachel Lindsay, *Collected Poems*. By permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers.

*F. Scott Fitzgerald to His Daughter*

Not that they starve, but starve so dreamlessly,  
Not that they sow, but that they seldom reap,  
Not that they serve, but have no gods to serve,  
Not that they die but that they die like sheep.

F. SCOTT FITZGERALD TO HIS DAUGHTER

August 8, 1933  
La Paix, Rodgers' Forge,  
Towson, Maryland

Dear Pie:

I feel very strongly about you doing duty. Would you give me a little more documentation about your reading in French? I am glad you are happy—but I never believe much in happiness. I never believe in misery either. Those are things you see on the stage or the screen or the printed page, they never really happen to you in life.

All I believe in in life is the rewards for virtue (according to your talents) and the *punishments* for not fulfilling your duties, which are doubly costly. If there is such a volume in the camp library, will you ask Mrs. Tyson to let you look up a sonnet of Shakespeare's in which the line occurs *Lilies that fester smell far worse than weeds*.

Have had no thoughts today, life seems composed of getting up a *Saturday Evening Post* story. I think of you, and always pleasantly; but if you call me "Pappy" again I am going to take the White Cat out and beat his bottom *hard, six times for every time you are impertinent*. Do you react to that?

I will arrange the camp bill.

Half-wit, I will conclude. Things to worry about:

Worry about courage

Worry about cleanliness  
Worry about efficiency  
Worry about horsemanship . . .

Things not to worry about:

Don't worry about popular opinion  
Don't worry about dolls  
Don't worry about the past  
Don't worry about the future  
Don't worry about growing up  
Don't worry about anybody getting ahead of you  
Don't worry about triumph  
Don't worry about failure unless it comes through your own fault  
Don't worry about mosquitoes  
Don't worry about flies  
Don't worry about insects in general  
Don't worry about parents  
Don't worry about boys  
Don't worry about disappointments  
Don't worry about pleasures  
Don't worry about satisfactions

Things to think about:

What am I really aiming at?  
How good am I really in comparison to my contemporaries in regard to:  
(a) Scholarship  
(b) Do I really understand about people and am I able to get along with them?  
(c) Am I trying to make my body a useful instrument or am I neglecting it?

With dearest love,

# A PRAYER FOR MY DAUGHTER

by WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS

Once more the storm is howling, and half  
hid

Under this cradle-hood and coverlid  
My child sleeps on. There is no obstacle  
But Gregory's wood and one bare hill  
Whereby the haystack- and roof-leveling  
wind,

Bred on the Atlantic, can be stayed;  
And for an hour I have walked and prayed  
Because of the great gloom that is in my  
mind.

I have walked and prayed for this young  
child an hour  
And heard the sea-wind scream upon the  
tower,

And under the arches of the bridge, and  
scream

In the elms above the flooded stream;  
Imagining in excited reverie  
That the future years had come,  
Dancing to a frenzied drum,  
Out of the murderous innocence of the  
sea.

May she be granted beauty, and yet not  
Beauty to make a stranger's eye distraught,  
Or hers before a looking-glass, for such,  
Being made beautiful overmuch,  
Consider beauty a sufficient end,  
Lose natural kindness and maybe  
The heart-revealing intimacy  
That chooses right, and never find a friend.

Helen being chosen found life flat and dull  
And later had much trouble from a fool,  
While that great Queen, that rose out of  
the spray,  
Being fatherless could have her way

Yet chose a bandy-legged smith for man.  
It's certain that fine women eat  
A crazy salad with their meat  
Whereby the Horn of Plenty is undone.

In courtesy I'd have her chiefly learned;  
Hearts are not had as a gift but hearts are  
earned

By those that are not entirely beautiful;  
Yet many, that have played the fool  
For beauty's very self, has charm made  
wise,

And many a poor man that has roved,  
Loved and thought himself beloved,  
From a glad kindness cannot take his eyes.

May she become a flourishing hidden tree  
That all her thoughts may like the linnet  
be,

And have no business but dispensing  
round

Their magnanimities of sound,  
Nor but in merriment begin a chase,  
Nor but in merriment a quarrel.  
Oh, may she live like some green laurel  
Rooted in one dear perpetual place.

My mind, because the minds that I have  
loved,

The sort of beauty that I have approved,  
Prosper but little, has dried up of late,  
Yet knows that to be choked with hate  
May well be of all evil chances chief.  
If there's no hatred in a mind  
Assault and battery of the wind  
Can never tear the linnet from the leaf.

An intellectual hatred is the worst,  
So let her think opinions are accursed.

From W. B. Yeats, *Collected Poems*. By permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers.

## *The People, Yes*

Have I not seen the loveliest woman born Out of the mouth of Plenty's horn, Because of her opinionated mind Barter that horn and every good By quiet natures understood For an old bellows full of angry wind?	She can, though every face should scowl And every windy quarter howl Or every bellows burst, be, happy still.  And may her bridegroom bring her to a house Where all's accustomed, ceremonious; For arrogance and hatred are the wares Peddled in the thoroughfares. How but in custom and in ceremony Are innocence and beauty born? Ceremony's a name for the rich horn, And custom for the spreading laurel tree.
Considering that, all hatred driven hence, The soul recovers radical innocence And learns at last that it is self-delighting, Self-appeasing, self-affrighting, And that its own sweet will is Heaven's will;	

### *from* THE PEOPLE, YES

*by* CARL SANDBURG

9

A father sees a son nearing manhood.  
What shall he tell that son?  
"Life is hard; be steel; be a rock."  
And this might stand him for the storms  
and serve him for humdrum and monotony  
and guide him amid sudden betrayals  
and tighten him for slack moments.  
"Life is a soft loam; be gentle; go easy."  
And this too might serve him.  
Brutes have been gentled where lashes failed.  
The growth of a frail flower in a path up  
has sometimes shattered and split a rock.  
A tough will counts. So does desire.  
So does a rich soft wanting.  
Without rich wanting nothing arrives.  
Tell him too much money has killed men  
and left them dead years before burial:  
the quest of lucre beyond a few easy needs  
has twisted good enough men  
sometimes into dry thwarted worms.  
Tell him time as a stuff can be wasted.

From *The People, Yes* by Carl Sandburg. Copyright, 1936, by Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc.

### *Coming-of-Age in Our Time*

Tell him to be a fool every so often  
and to have no shame over having been a fool  
yet learning something out of every folly  
hoping to repeat none of the cheap follies  
thus arriving at intimate understanding  
of a world numbering many fools.

Tell him to be alone often and get at himself  
and above all tell himself no lies about himself  
whatever the white lies and protective fronts  
he may use amongst other people.

Tell him solitude is creative if he is strong  
and the final decisions are made in silent rooms.

Tell him to be different from other people  
if it comes natural and easy being different.

Let him have lazy days seeking his deeper motives.

Let him seek deep for where he is a born natural.

Then he may understand Shakespeare  
and the Wright brothers, Pasteur, Pavlov,  
Michael Faraday and free imaginations  
bringing changes into a world resenting change.

He will be lonely enough  
to have time for the work  
he knows as his own.

### ANY MAN'S ADVICE TO HIS SON

*by* KENNETH FEARING

If you have lost the radio beam, then guide yourself by the sun or the stars.

(By the North Star at night, and in daytime by the compass and the sun.)

Should the sky be overcast and there are neither stars nor a sun, then steer by dead reckoning.

If the wind and direction and speed are not known, then trust to your wits and your luck.

Do you follow me? Do you understand? Or is this too difficult to learn?

But you must and you will, it is important that you do,

Because there may be troubles even greater than these that I have said.

Because, remember this: Trust no man fully.

Remember: If you must shoot at another man squeeze, do not jerk the trigger.

Otherwise you may miss and die, yourself, at the hand of some other man's son.

From Kenneth Fearing, *Collected Poems*. Copyright, 1940, by Random House, Inc. Reprinted by permission of Random House, Inc. Originally appeared in *The New Yorker*.

## *The Moral Equivalent of War*

And remember: In all this world there is nothing so easily squandered, or once gone, so completely lost as life.

I tell you this because I remember you when you were small,  
And because I remember all your monstrous infant boasts and lies,  
And the way you smiled, and how you ran and climbed, as no one else quite did,  
and how you fell and were bruised,  
And because there is no other person, anywhere on earth, who remembers these things as clearly as I do now.

## THE MORAL EQUIVALENT OF WAR

by WILLIAM JAMES

THE WAR against war is going to be no holiday excursion or camping party. The military feelings are too deeply grounded to abdicate their place among our ideals until better substitutes are offered than the glory and shame that come to nations as well as to individuals from the ups and downs of politics and the vicissitudes of trade. There is something highly paradoxical in the modern man's relation to war. Ask all our millions, north and south, whether they would vote now (were such a thing possible) to have our war for the Union expunged from history, and the record of a peaceful transition to the present time substituted for that of its marches and battles, and probably hardly a handful of eccentrics would say yes. Those ancestors, those efforts, those memories and legends, are the most ideal part of what we now own together, a sacred spiritual possession worth more than all the blood poured out. Yet ask those same people whether they would be willing in cold blood to start another civil war now to gain another similar possession, and not one man or woman would vote for the proposition. In modern eyes, precious

though wars may be, they must not be waged solely for the sake of the ideal harvest. Only when forced upon one, only when an enemy's injustice leaves us no alternative, is a war now thought permissible.

It was not thus in ancient times. The earlier men were hunting men, and to hunt a neighboring tribe, kill the males, loot the village and possess the females, was the most profitable, as well as the most exciting, way of living. Thus were the more martial tribes selected, and in chiefs and peoples a pure pugnacity and love of glory came to mingle with the more fundamental appetite for plunder.

Modern war is so expensive that we feel trade to be a better avenue to plunder; but modern man inherits all the innate pugnacity and all the love of glory of his ancestors. Showing war's irrationality and horror is of no effect upon him. The horrors make the fascination. War is the *strong* life; it is life *in extremis*; war taxes are the only ones men never hesitate to pay, as the budgets of all nations show us.

History is a bath of blood. The *Iliad* is one long recital of how Diomedes and

From William James, *Memories and Studies*, Longmans, Green and Company, Inc.



## *Coming-of-Age in Our Time*

Ajax, Sarpedon and Hector, *killed*. No detail of the wounds they made is spared us, and the Greek mind fed upon the story. Greek history is a panorama of jingoism and imperialism—war for war's sake, all the citizens being warriors. It is horrible reading, because of the irrationality of it all—save for the purpose of making "history"—and the history is that of the utter ruin of a civilization in intellectual respects perhaps the highest the earth has ever seen.

Those wars were purely piratical. Pride, gold, women, slaves, excitement, were their only motives. In the Peloponnesian War, for example, the Athenians asked the inhabitants of Melos (the island where the "Venus of Milo" was found), hitherto neutral, to own their lordship. The envoys meet, and hold a debate which Thucydides gives in full, and which, for sweet reasonableness of form, would have satisfied Matthew Arnold. "The powerful exact what they can," said the Athenians, "and the weak grant what they must." When the Meleans say that sooner than be slaves they will appeal to the gods, the Athenians reply: "Of the gods we believe and of men we know that, by a law of their nature, wherever they can rule they will. This law was not made by us, and we are not the first to have acted upon it; we did but inherit it, and we know that you and all mankind, if you were as strong as we are, would do as we do. So much for the gods; we have told you why we expect to stand as high in their good opinion as you." Well, the Meleans still refused, and their town was taken. "The Athenians," Thucydides quietly says, "thereupon put to death all who were of military age and made slaves of the women and children. They then colonized the is-

land, sending thither five hundred settlers of their own."

Alexander's career was piracy pure and simple, nothing but an orgy of power and plunder, made romantic by the character of the hero. There was no rational principle in it, and the moment he died his generals and governors attacked one another. The cruelty of those times is incredible. When Rome finally conquered Greece, Paulus Aemilius was told by the Roman Senate to reward his soldiers for their toil by "giving" them the old kingdom of Epirus. They sacked seventy cities and carried off a hundred and fifty thousand inhabitants as slaves. How many they killed I know not; but in Etolia they killed all the senators, five hundred and fifty in number. Brutus was "the noblest Roman of them all," but to reanimate his soldiers on the eve of Philippi he similarly promises to give them the cities of Sparta and Thessalonica to ravage, if they win the fight.

Such was the gory nurse that trained societies to cohesiveness. We inherit the warlike type; and for most of the capacities of heroism that the human race is full of we have to thank this cruel history. Dead men tell no tales, and if there were any tribes of other type than this they have left no survivors. Our ancestors have bred pugnacity into our bone and marrow, and thousands of years of peace won't breed it out of us. The popular imagination fairly fattens on the thought of wars. Let public opinion once reach a certain fighting pitch, and no ruler can withstand it. In the Boer War both governments began with bluff, but couldn't stay there; the military tension was too much for them. In 1898 our people had read the word WAR in letters three inches high for three months in every newspaper. The

## *The Moral Equivalent of War*

pliant politician McKinley was swept away by their eagerness, and our squalid war with Spain became a necessity.

At the present day, civilized opinion is a curious mental mixture. The military instincts and ideals are as strong as ever, but are confronted by reflective criticisms which sorely curb their ancient freedom. Innumerable writers are showing up the bestial side of military service. Pure loot and mastery seem no longer morally allowable motives, and pretexts must be found for attributing them solely to the enemy. England and we, our army and navy authorities repeat without ceasing, arm solely for "peace"; Germany and Japan it is who are bent on loot and glory. "Peace" in military mouths today is a synonym for "war expected." The word has become a pure provocative, and no government wishing peace sincerely should allow it ever to be printed in a newspaper. Every up-to-date dictionary should say that "peace" and "war" mean the same thing, now *in posse*, now *in actu*. It may even reasonably be said that the intensely sharp competitive *preparation* for war by the nations *is the real war*, permanent, unceasing; and that the battles are only a sort of public verification of the mastery gained during the "peace" interval.

It is plain that on this subject civilized man has developed a sort of double personality. If we take European nations, no legitimate interest of any one of them would seem to justify the tremendous destructions which a war to compass it would necessarily entail. It would seem as though common sense and reason ought to find a way to reach agreement in every conflict of honest interests. I myself think it our bounden duty to believe in such international rationality as possible. But, as things stand, I see how desperately hard it

is to bring the peace party and the war party together, and I believe that the difficulty is due to certain deficiencies in the program of pacificism which set the militarist imagination strongly, and to a certain extent justifiably, against it. In the whole discussion both sides are on imaginative and sentimental ground. It is but one utopia against another, and everything one says must be abstract and hypothetical. Subject to this criticism and caution, I will try to characterize in abstract strokes the opposite imaginative forces, and point out what to my own very fallible mind seems the best utopian hypothesis, the most promising line of conciliation.

In my remarks, pacifist though I am, I will refuse to speak of the bestial side of the war régime (already done justice to by many writers) and consider only the higher aspects of militaristic sentiment. Patriotism no one thinks discreditable; nor does anyone deny that war is the romance of history. But inordinate ambitions are the soul of every patriotism, and the possibility of violent death the soul of all romance. The militarily patriotic and romantic-minded everywhere, and especially the professional military class, refuse to admit for a moment that war may be a transitory phenomenon in social evolution. The notion of a sheep's paradise like that revolts, they say, our higher imagination. Where then would be the steeps of life? If war had ever stopped, we should have to reinvent it, on this view, to redeem life from flat degeneration.

Reflective apologists for war at the present day all take it religiously. It is a sort of sacrament. Its profits are to the vanquished as well as to the victor; and quite apart from any question of profit, it is an absolute good, we are told, for it is human nature at its highest dynamic. Its "horrors"

## *Coming-of-Age in Our Time*

are a cheap price to pay for rescue from the only alternative supposed, of a world of clerks and teachers, of co-education and zoophily, of "consumer's leagues" and "associated charities," of industrialism unlimited and feminism unabashed. No scorn, no hardness, no valor any more! Fie upon such a cattleyard of a planet!

So far as the central essence of this feeling goes, no healthy-minded person, it seems to me, can help to some degree partaking of it. Militarism is the great preserver of our ideals of hardihood, and human life with no use for hardihood would be contemptible. Without risks or prizes for the darer, history would be insipid indeed; and there is a type of military character which everyone feels that the race should never cease to breed, for everyone is sensitive to its superiority. The duty is incumbent on mankind, of keeping military characters in stock—of keeping them, if not for use, then as ends in themselves and as pure pieces of perfection—so that [Theodore] Roosevelt's weaklings and mollicoddles may not end by making everything else disappear from the face of nature.

This natural sort of feeling forms, I think, the innermost soul of army writings. Without any exception known to me, militarist authors take a highly mystical view of their subject, and regard war as a biological or sociological necessity, uncontrolled by ordinary psychological checks and motives. When the time of development is ripe the war must come, reason or no reason, for the justifications pleaded are invariably fictitious. War is, in short, a permanent human *obligation*. General Homer Lea, in his recent book, *The Valor of Ignorance*, plants himself squarely on this ground. Readiness for war is for him the essence of nationality,

and ability in it the supreme measure of the health of nations.

Nations, General Lea says, are never stationary—they must necessarily expand or shrink, according to their vitality or decrepitude. Japan now is culminating; and by the fatal law in question it is impossible that her statesmen should not long since have entered, with extraordinary foresight, upon a vast policy of conquest—the game in which the first moves were her wars with China and Russia and her treaty with England, and of which the final objective is the capture of the Philippines, the Hawaiian Islands, Alaska, and the whole of our coast west of the Sierra Passes. This will give Japan what her ineluctable vocation as a state absolutely forces her to claim, the possession of the entire Pacific Ocean; and to oppose these deep designs we Americans have, according to our author, nothing but our conceit, our ignorance, our commercialism, our corruption, and our feminism. General Lea makes a minute technical comparison of the military strength which we at present could oppose to the strength of Japan, and concludes that the islands, Alaska, Oregon, and Southern California, would fall almost without resistance, that San Francisco must surrender in a fortnight to a Japanese investment, that in three or four months the war would be over, and our Republic, unable to regain what it had heedlessly neglected to protect sufficiently, would then "disintegrate," until perhaps some Caesar should arise to weld us again into a nation.

A dismal forecast indeed! Yet not unpalatable, if the mentality of Japan's statesmen be of the Caesarian type of which history shows so many examples, and which is all that General Lea seems able to imagine. But there is no reason to think

## *The Moral Equivalent of War*

that women can no longer be the mothers of Napoleonic or Alexandrian characters; and if these come in Japan and find their opportunity, just such surprises as *The Valor of Ignorance* paints may lurk in ambush for us. Ignorant as we still are of the innermost recesses of Japanese mentality, we may be foolhardy to disregard such possibilities.

Other militarists are more complex and more moral in their considerations. The *Philosophie des Kriegeres*, by S. R. Steinmetz, is a good example. War, according to this author, is an ordeal instituted by God, who weighs the nations in its balance. It is the essential form of the state, and the only function in which peoples can employ all their powers at once and convergently. No victory is possible save as the resultant of a totality of virtues, no defeat for which some vice or weakness is not responsible. Fidelity, cohesiveness, tenacity, heroism, conscience, education, inventiveness, economy, wealth, physical health and vigor—there isn't a moral or intellectual point of superiority that doesn't tell, when God holds his assizes and hurls the peoples upon one another. *Die Weltgeschichte ist das Weltgericht*;<sup>1</sup> and Dr. Steinmetz does not believe that in the long run chance and luck play any part in apportioning the issues.

The virtues that prevail, it must be noted, are virtues anyhow, superiorities that count in peaceful as well as in military competition; but the strain on them, being infinitely intenser in the latter case, makes war infinitely more searching as a trial. No ordeal is comparable to its winnowings. Its dread hammer is the welder of men into cohesive states, and nowhere but in such states can human

nature adequately develop its capacity. The only alternative is "degeneration."

Dr. Steinmetz is a conscientious thinker, and his book, short as it is, takes much into account. Its upshot can, it seems to me, be summed up in Simon Patten's word, that mankind was nursed in pain and fear, and that the transition to a "pleasure economy" may be fatal to a being wielding no powers of defense against its disintegrative influences. If we speak of the *fear of emancipation from the fear régime*, we put the whole situation into a single phrase; fear regarding ourselves now taking the place of the ancient fear of the enemy.

Turn the fear over as I will in my mind, it all seems to lead back to two unwillingnesses of the imagination, one esthetic, and the other moral: unwillingness, first to envisage a future in which army life, with its many elements of charm, shall be forever impossible, and in which the destinies of peoples shall nevermore be decided quickly, thrillingly, and tragically, by force, but only gradually and insipidly by "evolution"; and, secondly, unwillingness to see the supreme theater of human strenuousness closed, and the splendid military aptitudes of men doomed to keep always in a state of latency and never show themselves in action. These insistent unwillingnesses, no less than other esthetic and ethical insistentencies, have, it seems to me, to be listened to and respected. One cannot meet them effectively by mere counter-insistency on war's expensiveness and horror. The horror makes the thrill; and when the question is of getting the extremest and supremest out of human nature, talk of expense sounds ignominious. The weakness of so much merely negative criticism

<sup>1</sup> "The history of the world is the judgment of the world."

## *Coming-of-Age in Our Time*

is evident—pacifism makes no converts from the military party. The military party denies neither the bestiality nor the horror, nor the expense; it only says that these things tell but half the story. It only says that war is *worth* them; that, taking human nature as a whole, its wars are its best protection against its weaker and more cowardly self, and that mankind cannot *afford* to adopt a peace economy.

Pacifists ought to enter more deeply into the esthetical and ethical point of view of their opponents. Do that first in any controversy, says J. J. Chapman; *then move the point*, and your opponent will follow. So long as anti-militarists propose no substitute for war's disciplinary function, no *moral equivalent* of war, analogous, as one might say, to the mechanical equivalent of heat, so long they fail to realize the full inwardness of the situation. And as a rule they do fail. The duties, penalties, and sanctions pictured in the utopias they paint are all too weak and tame to touch the military-minded. Tolstoi's pacifism is the only exception to this rule, for it is profoundly pessimistic as regards all this world's values, and makes the fear of the Lord furnish the moral spur provided elsewhere by the fear of the enemy. But our socialistic peace advocates all believe absolutely in this world's values; and instead of the fear of the Lord and the fear of the enemy, the only fear they reckon with is the fear of poverty if one be lazy. This weakness pervades all the socialistic literature with which I am acquainted. Even in Lowes Dickinson's exquisite dialogue,<sup>2</sup> high wages and short hours are the only forces invoked for overcoming man's distaste for repulsive kinds of labor. Meanwhile men at large still live as they always

have lived, under a pain-and-fear economy—for those of us who live in an ease economy are but an island in the stormy ocean—and the whole atmosphere of present-day utopian literature tastes mawkish and dishwatery to people who still keep a sense for life's more bitter flavors. It suggests, in truth, ubiquitous inferiority.

Inferiority is always with us, and merciless scorn of it is the keynote of the military temper. "Dogs, would you live forever?" shouted Frederick the Great. "Yes," say our utopians, "let us live forever, and raise our level gradually." The best thing about our "inferiors" today is that they are as tough as nails, and physically and morally almost as insensitive. Utopianism would see them soft and squeamish, while militarism would keep their callousness, but transfigure it into a meritorious characteristic, needed by "the service," and redeemed by that from the suspicion of inferiority. All the qualities of a man acquire dignity when he knows that the service of the collectivity that owns him needs them. If proud of the collectivity, his own pride rises in proportion. No collectivity is like an army for nourishing such pride; but it has to be confessed that the only sentiment which the image of pacific cosmopolitan industrialism is capable of arousing in countless worthy breasts is shame at the idea of belonging to *such* a collectivity. It is obvious that the United States of America as they exist today impress a mind like General Lea's as so much human blubber. Where is the sharpness and precipitousness, the contempt for life, whether one's own or another's? Where is the savage "yes" and "no," the unconditional duty? Where is the conscription? Where is the blood tax?

<sup>2</sup> *Justice and Liberty*, New York, 1909.

## *The Moral Equivalent of War*

Where is anything that one feels honored by belonging to?

Having said thus much in preparation, I will now confess my own utopia. I devoutly believe in the reign of peace and in the gradual advent of some sort of socialistic equilibrium. The fatalistic view of the war function is to me nonsense, for I know that war-making is due to definite motives and subject to prudential checks and reasonable criticisms, just like any other form of enterprise. And when whole nations are the armies, and the science of destruction vies in intellectual refinement with the sciences of production, I see that war becomes absurd and impossible from its own monstrosity. Extravagant ambitions will have to be replaced by reasonable claims, and nations must make common cause against them. I see no reason why all this should not apply to yellow as well as to white countries, and I look forward to a future when acts of war shall be formally outlawed as between civilized peoples.

All these beliefs of mine put me squarely into the anti-militarist party. But I do not believe that peace either ought to be or will be permanent on this globe, unless the states pacifically organized preserve some of the old elements of army discipline. A permanently successful peace economy cannot be a simple pleasure economy. In the more or less socialistic future toward which mankind seems drifting we must still subject ourselves collectively to these severities which answer to our real position upon this only partly hospitable globe. We must make new energies and hardihoods continue the manliness to which the military mind so faithfully clings. Martial virtues must be the enduring cement; intrepidity, contempt of softness, surrender of private interest, obedi-

ence to command, must still remain the rock upon which states are built—unless, indeed, we wish for dangerous reactions against commonwealth fit only for contempt, and liable to invite attack whenever a center of crystallization for military-minded enterprise gets formed anywhere in their neighborhood.

The war party is assuredly right in affirming and reaffirming that the martial virtues, although originally gained by the race through war, are absolute and permanent human goods. Patriotic pride and ambition in their military form are, after all, only specifications of a more general competitive passion. They are its first form, but that is no reason for supposing them to be its last form. Men now are proud of belonging to a conquering nation, and without a murmur they lay down their persons and their wealth, if by so doing they may fend off subjection. But who can be sure that *other aspects of one's country* may not, with time and education and suggestion enough, come to be regarded with similarly effective feelings of pride and shame? Why should men not some day feel that it is worth a blood tax to belong to a collectivity superior in *any* ideal respect? Why should they not blush with indignant shame if the community that owns them is vile in any way whatsoever? Individuals, daily more numerous, now feel this civic passion. It is only a question of blowing on the spark till the whole population gets incandescent, and on the ruins of the old morals of military honor, a stable system of morals of civic honor builds itself up. What the whole community comes to believe in grasps the individual as in a vise. The war function has grasped us so far; but constructive interests may some day seem no less impera-

## Coming-of-Age in Our Time

tive, and impose on the individual a hardly lighter burden.

Let me illustrate my idea more concretely. There is nothing to make one indignant in the mere fact that life is hard, that men should toil and suffer pain. The planetary conditions once for all are such, and we can stand it. But that so many men, by mere accidents of birth and opportunity, should have a life of *nothing else* but toil and pain and hardness and inferiority imposed upon them, should have *no* vacation, while others natively no more deserving never get any taste of this campaigning life at all—*this* is capable of arousing indignation in reflective minds. It may end by seeming shameful to all of us that some of us have nothing but campaigning, and others nothing but unmanly ease. If now—and this is my idea—there were, instead of military conscription, a conscription of the whole youthful population to form for a certain number of years a part of the army enlisted against *Nature*, the injustice would tend to be evened out, and numerous other goods to the commonwealth would follow. The military ideals of hardihood and discipline would be wrought into the growing fiber of the people; no one would remain blind as the luxurious classes now are blind, to man's real relations to the globe he lives on, and to the permanently sour and hard foundations of his higher life. To coal and iron mines, to freight trains, to fishing fleets in December, to dish-washing, clothes-washing, and window-washing, to road-building and tunnel-making, to foundries and stokeholes, and to the frames of skyscrapers, would our gilded youths be drafted off, according to their choice, to get the childishness knocked out of them, and to come back into society with healthier sympathies and soberer

ideas. They would have paid their blood tax, done their own part in the immortal human warfare against nature, they would tread the earth more proudly, the women would value them more highly, they would be better fathers and teachers of the following generation.

Such a conscription, with the state of public opinion that would have required it, and the many moral fruits it would bear, would preserve in the midst of a pacific civilization the manly virtues which the military party is so afraid of seeing disappear in peace. We should get toughness without callousness, authority with as little criminal cruelty as possible, and painful work done cheerily because the duty is temporary, and threatens not, as now, to degrade the whole remainder of one's life. I spoke of the "moral equivalent" of war. So far, war has been the only force that can discipline a whole community, and until an equivalent discipline is organized, I believe that war must have its way. But I have no serious doubt that the ordinary prides and shames of social man, once developed to a certain intensity, are capable of organizing such a moral equivalent as I have sketched, or some other just as effective for preserving manliness of type. It is but a question of time, of skillful propagandism, and of opinion-making men seizing historic opportunities.

The martial type of character can be bred without war. Strenuous honor and disinterestedness abound elsewhere. Priests and medical men are in a fashion educated to it, and we should all feel some degree of it imperative if we were conscious of our work as an obligatory service to the state. We should be *owned*, as soldiers are by the army, and our pride would rise accordingly. We could be poor, then, without humiliation, as army officers now are.

## *The Moral Equivalent of War*

The only thing needed henceforward is to inflame the civic temper as past history has inflamed the military temper. H. G. Wells, as usual, sees the center of the situation. "In many ways," he says, "military organization is the most peaceful of activities. When the contemporary man steps from the street, of clamorous insincere advertisement, push, adulteration, underselling and intermittent employment, into the barrack yard, he steps on to a higher social plane, into an atmosphere of service and co-operation and of infinitely more honorable emulations. Here at least men are not flung out of employment to degenerate because there is no immediate work for them to do. They are fed and drilled and trained for better services. Here at least a man is supposed to win promotion by self-forgetfulness and not by self-seeking."<sup>3</sup> . . .

Wells adds that he thinks that the conceptions of order and discipline, the tradition of service and devotion, of physical fitness, unstinted exertion, and universal

responsibility, which universal military duty is now teaching European nations, will remain a permanent acquisition, when the last ammunition has been used in the fireworks that celebrate the final peace. I believe as he does. It would be simply preposterous if the only force that could work ideals of honor and standards of efficiency into English or American natures should be the fear of being killed by the Germans or the Japanese. Great indeed is Fear; but it is not, as our military enthusiasts believe and try to make us believe, the only stimulus known for awakening the higher ranges of men's spiritual energy. The amount of alteration in public opinion which my utopia postulates is vastly less than the difference between the mentality of those black warriors who pursued Stanley's party on the Congo with their cannibal war cry of "Meat! Meat!" and that of the General Staff of any civilized nation. History has seen the latter interval bridged over: the former one can be bridged over much more easily.

<sup>3</sup> *First and Last Things*, 1908, p. 215.





## PART VIII · TWENTIETH CENTURY BLUES

**D**URING the last thirty years mankind has suffered a first great war, a futile peace, a world-wide depression and dislocation of currencies, mass unemployment, the rise of forbidding and powerful political nationalisms, a second even greater war. Now it is faced again with the problems of peace. These were gigantic events, in a troubled century. Before them the individual has often seemed to dwindle into insignificance.

A feeling of helplessness has sometimes settled over him, a sense of being lost historically, a feeling of loneliness and self-distrust, of futility and disillusionment. Many of these thirty years have been informed by a "Twentieth Century Blues."

Yet in the very midst of this kind of despair he has often found comfort in the awareness of its pattern and effect. In popular songs he has described the sophisticated emptiness of his time. He has found entertainment in the comic side of traditional individualism and conservatism, and has probed the motives of those who pretend to a new, more desperate and more nervous self-assertion. Eliot, Auden, and Behrman have shown him the exhaustion of the old isolated self of the past, and Mary Petty etches the lesson on our minds. Mitchell indicates the anomalous position in our time of the once rugged individualist, whose character was whole and self-contained.

But the comfort that modern man has derived from the representation of his peculiar position in the world and universe has not always been lasting. From where he stands, he has seen the precipices and pitfalls which mark the dangers in his path ahead. Out of a continuous sense of futility comes fear. The poems of Fearing see us whistling in the dark, insisting that it can't really happen here, but as MacLeish indicates in "The Fall of the City" our fears can eventually make us, ironically, the victims of ourselves. We may succumb to an almost hypnotic belief in the "end," and retire into an underground of our own natures, the last ultimate isolation. Eventually, Forster suggests, if we go too far in this, the machinery of our whole life and culture and civilization will stop. Thus the individualist's weapon for cutting through the problems of our time is two-edged: it may bring us the values which we are sure we need, but it may also lead us to an end which we do not desire.

## TWENTIETH CENTURY BLUES

*by* NOEL COWARD

Blues—Twentieth Century blues—are getting me down.  
Who's escaped those dreary Twentieth Century blues?  
Why, if there's a God in the sky, why shouldn't he grin  
Up high above this dreary Twentieth Century din?  
In this great illusion, chaos, and confusion  
People seem to lose their way.  
What is there to strive for, love or keep alive for?  
Say Hey! Hey! Call it a day.  
Blues—nothing to win or to lose,  
It's getting me down.  
Who's escaped those dreary Twentieth Century blues?

Copyright, 1931, by Chappell & Co. Ltd.

## SOPHISTICATED LADY

*Lyrics by* IRVING MILLS *and* MITCHELL PARISH

*Score by* DUKE ELLINGTON

They say, "Into your early life romance came,  
And in this heart of yours burned a flame—  
A flame that flickered one day, and died away.  
Then, with disillusion deep in your eyes,  
You learned that fools in love soon grow wise—  
The years have changed you somehow. I see you now—  
Smoking, drinking, never thinking of tomorrow—  
so nonchalant—  
Diamonds shining, dancing, dining  
With some man in a restaurant.  
(Is that all you really want?)  
No, sophisticated lady, I know  
You've missed a love you lost so long ago,—  
And when nobody is nigh you cry."

By permission of copyright proprietor, Mills Music, Inc.

# THE PHILADELPHIA STORY

by PHILIP BARRY

## CHARACTERS

SETH LORD	MACAULAY CONNOR
MARGARET LORD	GEORGE KITTREDGE
ALEXANDER LORD	DR. PARSONS
TRACY LORD	THOMAS
DINAH LORD	EDWARD
WILLIAM TRACY	ELSIE
C. K. DEXTER HAVEN	MAY
ELIZABETH IMBRIE	MAC

**ACTION AND SCENE:** *The play takes place in the course of twenty-four hours at the Seth Lords' house in the country near Philadelphia. The Time is the present, late June, and the Scenes are as follows:*

ACT I. *The Sitting Room. Late morning, Friday*

ACT II. *Scene 1: The Porch. Late evening, Friday*

*Scene 2: The Porch. Early morning, Saturday*

ACT III. *The Sitting Room. Late morning, Saturday*

## ACT I

[*The Sitting Room of the Lords' house in the country near Philadelphia is a large, comfortably furnished room of a somewhat faded elegance containing a number of very good Victorian pieces. The entrance from the Hall is at Right, upstage, down two broad, shallow steps. The entrance into what the family still call "the Parlor" is through double doors downstage Right. At Left are two glass doors leading to the Porch. A writing desk stands between them. There is a large marble fireplace in the back wall and a grand piano in the corner at Left. Chairs and a table are at downstage Right and at downstage Left another table, an easy chair and a sofa. There is a large and fine*

*portrait over the fireplace and other paintings here and there. A wall cabinet contains a quantity of bric-a-brac and there is more of it, together with a number of signed photographs in silver frames, upon the tables and piano. There are also several cardboard boxes strewn about. It is late on a Friday morning, in June, an overcast day. DINAH, who is all of thirteen years old, is stretched out on the sofa reading a set of printers' galley proofs. TRACY, a strikingly lovely girl of 24, sits in the chair at Left, a leather writing set upon her knees, scribbling notes. She wears slacks and a blouse. MARGARET LORD, their mother, a young and smart 47, comes in from the Hall with three more boxes in*

Copyright 1939 by Philip Barry and Ellen S. Barry.

## Twentieth Century Blues

her arms. She places them upon the table near TRACY.]

MARGARET. I'm terribly afraid that some of the cards for these last-minute presents have got themselves mixed. Look at them, Tracy—perhaps you can tell.

TRACY. In a minute, Mother. I'm up to my neck' in these blank thank-you notes. [DINAH folds one of the proof sheets she is reading under another.]

DINAH. This stinks.

MARGARET. Not "stinks," darling. If absolutely necessary, "smells"—but only if absolutely necessary. What is it?

DINAH. I found it in Sandy's room. It's something that's going to be in a magazine. It certainly stinks, all right.

MARGARET. Keep out of your brother's things, dear—and his house. [She studies a list of names.] Ninety-four for the ceremony, five hundred and six for the reception—I don't know where we'll put them all, if it should rain.

DINAH. It won't rain.

MARGARET. Uncle Willie wanted to insure against it with Lloyd's but I wouldn't let him. If I was God and someone bet I wouldn't let it rain, I'd show him fast enough. This second page is solid Cadwalader. Twenty-six.

DINAH. That's a lot of Cadwalader.

MARGARET. One, my child, is a lot of Cadwalader.

TRACY. How do you spell omelet?

MARGARET. O-m-m-e-l-e-t.

TRACY. I thought there was another "l."

MARGARET. The omelet dish from the—?

TRACY. You said it was an omelet dish.

MARGARET. It might be for fish.

TRACY. "Fish dish"? Sounds idiotic.

MARGARET. I should simply say "Thank you so much for your lovely silver dish."

TRACY. Here's the tag. "Old Dutch Muffin Ear, Circa 1810." What the—? [She drops the card.] I am simply enchanted with your old Dutch Muffin Ear—with which my husband and I will certainly hear any muffin coming a mile away.

DINAH. Lookit, Tracy: don't you think you've done enough notes for one day?

TRACY. Don't disturb me. [She examines another card.] From Cousin Horace Macomber, one pair of game shears, looking like hell. [Picks up shears.]

DINAH. He's so awful. What did he send the other time?

TRACY. No one to speak of sent anything the other time.

MARGARET. It's such a pity your brother Junius can't be here for your wedding. London's so far away.

DINAH. I miss old Junius: you did a good job when you had him, Mother.

MARGARET. The first is always the best. They deteriorate as you go on.

TRACY. There was no occasion to send anything the other time.

DINAH [Reading the proof sheets.] This is certainly pretty rooty-tooty all right.

TRACY. It could scarcely be considered a wedding at all, the other time. When you run off to Maryland, on a sudden impulse, the way Dexter and I did—

DINAH. Ten months is quite long to be married, though. You can have a baby in nine, can't you?

TRACY. I guess—if you put your mind to it.

DINAH. Why didn't you?

TRACY. Mother, don't you think it's time for her nap?

DINAH. I imagine you and George'll have slews of 'em.

TRACY. I hope so—all like you, dear, with the same wild grace. [She rises from

## The Philadelphia Story

her chair with a box of envelopes, which she places upon the desk.]

DINAH. Lookit: "the other time"—he's back from wherever he's been.

MARGARET. What do you mean?

DINAH. Dexter, of course. I saw his car in front of his house: the roadster. It must be him.

MARGARET. When? When did you?

DINAH. This morning, early, when I was out exercising The Hoofer.

MARGARET. Why didn't you tell us? [TRACY moves to her unconcernedly.]

TRACY. I'm not worried, Mother. The only trouble Mr. C. K. Dexter Haven ever gave me was when he married me.—You might say the same for one Seth Lord. If you'd just face it squarely as I did—

MARGARET. That will do! I will allow none of you to criticize your father.

TRACY. What are we expected to do when he treats you—

MARGARET. Did you hear me, Tracy?

TRACY. All right, I give up.

MARGARET.—And in view of this second attempt of yours, it might pay you to remind yourself that neither of us has proved to be a very great success as a wife.

TRACY. We just picked the wrong first husbands, that's all.

MARGARET. That is an extremely vulgar remark.

TRACY. Oh, who cares about either of them any more— [She leans over the back of MARGARET's chair and hugs her.] Golly Moses, I'm going to be happy now!

MARGARET. Darling.

TRACY. Isn't George an angel?

MARGARET. George is an angel.

TRACY. Is he handsome, or is he not?

MARGARET. George is handsome.

TRACY. Suds. I'm a lucky girl. [She gathers up her boxes and writing case.]

DINAH. I like Dexter. [TRACY moves toward the Hall doorway.]

TRACY. Really? Why don't you ask him to lunch, or something? [And goes out.]

DINAH [looking after her]. She's awfully mean about him, isn't she?

MARGARET. He was rather mean to her, my dear.

DINAH. Did he really sock her?

MARGARET. Don't say "sock," darling. "Strike" is quite an ugly enough word.

DINAH. But did he really?

MARGARET. I'm afraid I don't know the details.

DINAH. Cruelty and drunkenness, it said.

MARGARET. Dinah!

DINAH. It was right in the papers.

MARGARET. You read too much. You'll spoil your eyes.

DINAH. I think it's an awful thing to say about a man. I don't think they like things like that said about them.

MARGARET. I'm sure they don't. [DINAH picks up the proof sheets again.]

DINAH. Father's going to be hopping when he reads all this about himself in that magazine, *Destiny*, when it comes out.

MARGARET. All what? *About whom?*

DINAH. Father—that they're going to publish.

MARGARET. Dinah, what *are* you talking about?

DINAH. It's what they call proof sheets for some article they're going to call "Broadway and Finance," and Father's in it, and so they just sent it on to Sandy—sort of you know, on approval. It was just there on the table in his room, and so I—

MARGARET. But the article! What does the article say? [She takes the proof sheets and examines them.]

## Twentieth Century Blues

DINAH. Oh, it's partly about Father backing three shows for that dancer—what's her name—Tina Mara—and his early history—and about the stables—and why he's living in New York, instead of with us any more, and—

MARGARET. Great heaven—what on earth can we do?

DINAH. Couldn't Father sue them for— for liable?

MARGARET. But it's true—it's all— [*She glances at DINAH.*] That is, I mean to say—

DINAH. I don't think the part about Tina Mara is, the way they put it. It's simply full of innundo.

MARGARET. Of what?

DINAH. Of innundo. [*She rests her chin on her hand and stares into space.*] Oh, I do wish something would happen here. Nothing ever possibly in the least ever happens. [*Then suddenly hops up and goes to her mother.*] Next year can I go to the Conservatory in New York? They teach you to sing and dance and act and everything at once. Can I, Mother?

MARGARET. Save your dramatics, Dinah. [*She folds the proof sheets and puts them down.*] Oh, why didn't Sandy tell me!

DINAH. Mother, why won't Tracy at least ask her own father to her wedding?

MARGARET. Your sister has very definite opinions about certain things. [*She moves toward the desk at Left.*]

DINAH. [*following her*]. She's sort of—you know—hard, isn't she?

MARGARET. Not hard—none of my children is that, I hope. Tracy sets exceptionally high standards for herself, that's all—and although she lives up to them, other people aren't always quite able to. If your Uncle Willie Tracy comes in, tell him to wait. I want to see him. [*Having put the*

*desk in order, she moves toward the Porch door.*]

DINAH. Tell me one thing: don't you think it's stinking not at least to want Father? [*MARGARET stops in the doorway and turns to her.*]

MARGARET. Yes, darling, between ourselves I think it's good and stinking. [*And goes out.*]

DINAH.—And I bet if Dexter knew what she— [*She waits a moment, then goes to the telephone and dials four numbers.*] Hello, may I please speak to Mr. Dexter Haven—what?—Dexter! It's you! [*Then affectedly.*] A very great pleasure to have you back.—Dinah, you goat, Dinah Lord. What?—You bet!—Lookit, Dexter, Tracy says why don't you come right over for lunch? What? But she told me to ask you.—Listen, though, maybe it would be better if you'd—Hello!—Hello! [*She replaces the telephone as TRACY comes in from the Hall with a large roll of paper.*]

TRACY. Who was that?

DINAH. Wrong number. [*TRACY spreads the roll of paper out on the table.*]

TRACY. Listen, darling, give me a hand with this cockeyed seating arrangement, will you? At least hold it down.—George doesn't want the Grants at the bridal table. [*ALEXANDER (SANDY) LORD, 26, comes in from the Hall.*] He says they're fast. He—

SANDY. Hello, kids.

TRACY. Sandy! [*She reaches up to him, hugs him.*]

SANDY. Where's Mother?

TRACY. She's around. How's New York? How's Sue?—How's the baby?

SANDY. Blooming. They sent their love, sorry they can't make the wedding. Is there a party tonight, of course?

TRACY. Aunt Geneva's throwing a monster.

## The Philadelphia Story

SANDY. Boy, am I going to get plastered.  
[To DINAH.] Hello, little fellah.

DINAH. Hello, yourself. [He gives her a small, flat box.]

SANDY. This is for you, Mug. Get the three race horses into the paddock. It's tough. Work it out.

DINAH. Oh, thanks! [She begins to work at the puzzle.]

SANDY [to TRACY]. Sue's and my wedding present comes by registered mail, Tracy—and a pretty penny it set me back.

TRACY. You're a bonny boy, Sandy. I love you.

SANDY. Mutual. [MARGARET re-enters from the Porch.]

MARGARET. I was wondering about you. [SANDY goes to her and embraces her.]

SANDY. Give us a kiss.—You look fine.—Imagine this, a grandmother! How's everything?

MARGARET. Absolute chaos.

SANDY. Just how you like it, eh? Just when you function best!

MARGARET. How's my precious grandchild?

SANDY. Couldn't be better, Sue too. Ten more days in the hospital, and back home they'll be.

MARGARET. I broke into your house and did up the nursery.

SANDY. Good girl. Where's George, Tracy?

TRACY. He's staying in the Gatehouse. He still had business things to clear up and I thought he'd be quieter there.

SANDY. Did he see his picture in *Dime*? Was he sore at the "Former Coal Miner" caption? [MARGARET picks up the proof sheets once more.]

MARGARET. What about this absurd article about your father and—er—Tina Mara in *Destiny*, Sandy? Can't it be stopped?

TRACY. About Father and—? Let me see! [She takes the proof sheets.]

SANDY. Where'd you get hold of that? [He tries unsuccessfully to recover them.]

MARGARET. Get ready for lunch, Dinah.

DINAH. In a minute. I'm busy. [She flops down on the Hall step and continues to work at her puzzle.]

TRACY [reading]. Oh, the absolute devils!—Who publishes *Destiny*?

SANDY. Sidney Kidd.—Also *Dime*, also *Spy*, the picture sheet. I worked on *Dime* for two summers. You know that.

TRACY. Stopped? It's got to be! I'll go to him myself.

SANDY. A fat lot of good that would do. You're too much alike. God save us from the strong. [He seats himself.] I saw Kidd the day before yesterday. It took about three hours, but I finally got through to him.

TRACY. What happened?

SANDY. I think I fixed things.

TRACY. How?

SANDY. That would be telling.

MARGARET. Just so long as your father never hears of it.

SANDY. I had a copy of the piece made, and sent it around to his flat, with a little note saying, "How do you like it?" [TRACY laughs shortly.]

TRACY. You are a fellah.

MARGARET. Sandy!

SANDY. Why not? Let him worry a little.

TRACY. Let him worry a lot! [THOMAS enters from Hall.]

SANDY. Yes, Thomas?

THOMAS. Mr. Connor and the lady say they will be down directly, sir.

SANDY. Thanks, that's fine. Tell May or Elsie to look after Miss Imbrie, will you?

THOMAS. Very good, sir. [He goes out.]

MARGARET. What's all this?

TRACY. "Mr. Connor and—?"



## Twentieth Century Blues

SANDY. Mike Connor—Macaulay Connor, his name is.—And—er—Elizabeth Imbrie. I'm putting them up for over the wedding. They're quite nice, you'll like them.

TRACY. You asked people to stay in this house without even asking us?

MARGARET. I think it's very queer indeed.

TRACY. I think it's queerer than that—I think it's paranoiac.

SANDY. Keep your shirt on.—I just sort of drifted into them and we sort of got to talking about what riots weddings are as a rule, and they'd never been to a Philadelphia one, and—

TRACY. You're lying, Sandy.—I can always tell.

SANDY. Now look here, Tracy—

TRACY. Look where? "Elizabeth Imbrie"—I know that name! She's a—wait—damn your eyes, Sandy, she's a photographer!

SANDY. For a fact?

TRACY. For a couple of facts—and a famous one!

SANDY. Well, it might be nice to have some good shots of the wedding.

TRACY. What are they doing here?

SANDY. Just now I suppose they're brushing up and going to the bathroom. They're very interesting people. [*He moves uneasily about the room.*] She's practically an artist, and he's written a couple of books—and—and I thought you liked interesting people. [*DINAH rises from her step.*]

DINAH. I do!

TRACY [*suddenly*]. I know—now I know! They're from *Destiny*.—*Destiny* sent them!

MARGARET. *Destiny*?

SANDY. You're just a mass of intuition, Tray.

TRACY. Well, they can go right back again.

SANDY. No, they can't. Not till they get their story.

TRACY. Story? What story?

SANDY. The Philadelphia story.

MARGARET. And what on earth's that?

SANDY. Well, it seems Kidd has had Connor and Imbrie and a couple of others down here for two months doing the town: I mean writing it up. It's to come out in three parts in the Autumn. "Industrial Philadelphia," "Historical Philadelphia"—and then the third—

TRACY. I'm going to be sick.

SANDY. Yes, dear: "Fashionable Philadelphia."

TRACY. I *am* sick.

MARGARET. But why us? Surely there are other families who—

TRACY. Yes—why not the Drexels or the Biddles or the *qu'est-ce-que-c'est* Cassatts? [*SANDY seats himself again.*]

SANDY. We go even further back: it's those Quakers.—And of course there's your former marriage and your looks and your general prowess in golf and fox-hunting, with a little big game on the side, and your impending second marriage into the coal fields—

TRACY. Never mind that!

SANDY. I don't, but they do. It's news, darling, news.

MARGARET. Is there no such thing as privacy any more?

TRACY. Only in bed, Mother, and not always there.

SANDY. Anyhow, I thought I was licked—and what else could I do?

TRACY. A trade, eh? So we're to let them publish the inside story of my wedding in order to keep Father's wretched little affair quiet!

## *The Philadelphia Story*

MARGARET. It's utterly and completely disgusting.

SANDY. It was my suggestion, not Kidd's. I may have been put in the way of making it, I don't know. It's hard to tell, with a future President of the United States.

TRACY. What's the writer's name again?

SANDY. Connor, Macaulay Connor. I don't think he likes the assignment any more than we do—the gal either. They were handling the Industrial end. [TRACY goes to the telephone, and dials.]

TRACY. My heart's breaking for them.

MARGARET. I don't know what the world is coming to. It's an absolute invasion: two strange people tramping through the house, prying and investigating—

TRACY. Maybe we're going through a revolution without knowing it. [*To the telephone.*] Hello, is Mr. Briggs there?—This is Tracy Lord, Mr. Briggs.—Look, I wonder if you happen to have on hand any books by Macaulay Connor? [SANDY rises.]—You have? Could you surely send them out this afternoon?—Thanks, Mr. Briggs, you're sweet. [*She replaces the telephone, raging.*]—If they've got to have a story, I'll give them a story—I'll give them one they can't get through the mails!

SANDY. Oh—oh—I was afraid of this.

TRACY. Who the hell do they think they are, barging in on peaceful people—watching every little mannerism—jotting down notes on how we sit, and stand, and eat and move—

DINAH [*eagerly*]. Will they do that?

TRACY.—And all in the horrible, snide corkscrew English! Well, if we have to submit to it to save Father's face—which incidentally doesn't deserve it—I'm for giving them a picture of home life that will stand their hair on end.

MARGARET. You will do nothing of the sort, Tracy.

SANDY. She thinks she'll be the outrageous Miss Lord. The fact is, she'll probably be Sweetness and Light to the neck.

TRACY. Oh, will I!

SANDY. You don't know yet what being under the microscope does to people. I felt it a little coming out in the car. It's a funny feeling.

MARGARET. It's odd how self-conscious we've all become over the worldly possessions that once made us so confident.

SANDY. I know: you catch yourself explaining away your dough, the way you would a black eye: you've just run into it in the dark or something.

MARGARET. We shall be ourselves with them, very much ourselves.

DINAH. But, Mother, you want us to create a good impression, don't you?

MARGARET [*to SANDY*]. They don't know that *we* know what they're here for, I hope?

SANDY. No: that was understood.

DINAH. I should think it would look awfully funny to them, Father's not being here for his own daughter's wedding.

TRACY. Would you, now?

SANDY. That's all right; I fixed that, too.

TRACY. How do you mean you did?

SANDY. I told Sue to send a telegram before dinner. "Confined to bed with a cold, unable to attend nuptials, oceans of love, Father."

MARGARET. Not just in those words!

SANDY. Not exactly.—It'll come on the telephone and Thomas will take it and you won't have your glasses and he'll read it aloud to you.

MARGARET. Tracy, will you promise to behave like a lady, if only for my sake?

TRACY. I'll do my best, Mrs. Lord. I don't know how good that is.

MARGARET. Go put a dress on.

TRACY. Yes, Mother.

## Twentieth Century Blues

MARGARET. There are too many legs around here.

TRACY. Suds! I'll be pure Victorian, all frills and ruffles, conversationally chaste as an egg. [WILLIAM (UNCLE WILLIE) TRACY, 62, enters from the Parlor.] Hello, Uncle Willie. Where did you come from?

UNCLE WILLIE. Your Great-aunt Geneva has requested my absence from the house until dinner time. Can you give me lunch, Margaret?

MARGARET. But of course! With pleasure.

DINAH. Hello, Uncle Willie.

SANDY. How are you, Uncle Willie?

UNCLE WILLIE. Alexander and Dinah, good morning. [To TRACY.]—My esteemed wife, the old war horse, is certainly spreading herself for your party. I seriously question the propriety of any such display in such times, but she—why aren't you being married in church, Tracy?

TRACY. I like the parlor here so much better. Didn't you think it looked pretty as you came through?

UNCLE WILLIE. That is not the point. The point is that I've sunk thousands in that church, and I'd like to get some use of it.—Give me a glass of sherry, Margaret.

MARGARET. Not until lunch time, my dear.

UNCLE WILLIE. These women.

DINAH. You're really a wicked old man, aren't you? [He points beyond her, to the Porch.]

UNCLE WILLIE. What's that out there? [DINAH turns to look. He vigorously pinches her behind.]

DINAH. Ouch!

UNCLE WILLIE. Never play with fire, child. [He looks at the others.] What's a-lack here? What's a-stirrin'? What's amiss?

SANDY. Uncle Willie, do you know anything about the laws of libel? [UNCLE WILLIE seats himself.]

UNCLE WILLIE. Certainly, I know about the laws of libel. Why shouldn't I? I know all about them. In 1916, I, Willie Q. Tracy, successfully defended the *Post*, and George Lorimer personally, against one of the cleverest, one of the subtlest—why? What do you want to say?

SANDY. It isn't what I want to say—

TRACY. Is it enough if they can simply prove that it is true?

UNCLE WILLIE. Certainly not! Take me: if I was totally bald and wore a toupee, if I had flat feet, with these damnable metal arches, false teeth, and a case of double—

DINAH. Poor Uncle Willie.

UNCLE WILLIE. I said "If I had"—And if such facts were presented in the public prints in such a manner as to hold me up to public ridicule, I could collect substantial damages—and would, if it took me all winter.

TRACY. Suppose the other way around. Suppose they printed things that weren't true.

UNCLE WILLIE. Suppose they did? Suppose it was erroneously stated, that during my travels as a young man I was married in a native ceremony to a dusky maiden in British Guinea, I doubt if I could collect a cent. [He looks past her, toward the Hall door.] Who are these two strange people coming down the hall? [The entire family rises.]

MARGARET. Oh, good gracious! [TRACY takes UNCLE WILLIE by the arm.]

TRACY. Come on—out! [She leads him toward the Parlor at Right.] What was she like, Uncle Willie?

UNCLE WILLIE. Who?

TRACY. British Guinea?

## *The Philadelphia Story*

UNCLE WILLIE. So very unlike your Aunt Geneva, my dear. [*They go out.*]

MARGARET. Dinah—

DINAH. But, Mother, oughtn't we—?

MARGARET. Come! Sandy can entertain them until we—until we collect ourselves. [*She directs DINAH into the Parlor.*]

SANDY. What'll I say?

MARGARET. I wish I could tell you—in a few very well-chosen words. [*She goes out. SANDY is alone for a moment. He hunches his shoulders uncomfortably and clears his throat.* MACAULAY (MIKE), 30, and ELIZABETH (LIZ) IMBRIE, 28, come in from the Hall. LIZ has a small and important camera hanging from a leather strap around her neck.]

LIZ.—In here?

MIKE. He said the sitting room. I suppose that's contrasted to the living room, the ballroom, the drawing room, the morning room, the—[*He sees SANDY.*] Oh, hello again. Here you are.

SANDY. Here I am.

MIKE. It's quite a place.

SANDY. It is, isn't it?—I couldn't help overhearing you as you came in. Do you mind if I say something?

MIKE. Not at all. What?

SANDY. Your approach to your job seems definitely antagonistic. I don't think it's fair. I think you ought to give us a break.

MIKE. It's not a job I asked for.

SANDY. I know it's not. But in spite of it, and in spite of certain of our regrettable inherited characteristics, we just might be fairly decent. Why not wait and see? [*MIKE and LIZ seat themselves.*]

MIKE. You have quite a style yourself.—You're on the *Saturday Evening Post*, did you say? [*SANDY seats himself, facing MIKE and LIZ.*]

SANDY. I work for it.

MIKE. Which end?

SANDY. Editorial.

MIKE. I have to tell you, in all honesty, that I'm opposed to everything you represent.

SANDY. *Destiny* is hardly a radical sheet: what is it you're doing—boring from within?

MIKE.—And I'm not a communist, not by a long shot.

LIZ. Just a small pin-feather in the Left Wing. [*MIKE looks at her.*—Sorry.

SANDY. Jeffersonian Democrat?

MIKE. That's more like it.

SANDY. Have you ever seen his house at Monticello? It's quite a place too.

LIZ. Home Team One; Visitors Nothing. [*She rises and looks about her.*] Is this house very old, Mr. Lord?

SANDY. No, there are a very few old ones on the Main Line.—The Gatehouse is, of course. Father's grandfather built that for a summer place when they all lived on Rittenhouse Square. Father and Mother did this about 1910—the spring before my brother Junius was born. He's the eldest. You won't meet him, he's in the diplomatic service in London.

MIKE [*to LIZ*]. Wouldn't you know?

SANDY. I worked for Sidney Kidd once. What do you make of him?

MIKE [*after a moment*]. A brilliant editor, and a very wonderful man.

LIZ. Also, our bread and butter.

SANDY. Sorry to have been rude. [*MIKE takes a sheaf of typewritten cards from his pocket and begins to glance through them.*]

MIKE. I suppose you're all opposed to the Administration?

SANDY. The present one? No—as a matter of fact we're Loyalists.

MIKE. Surprise, surprise.—The Research Department didn't give us much data.—Your sister's fiancé—George Kittredge—

## Twentieth Century Blues

aged 32.—Since last year General Manager Quaker State Coal, in charge of operation.—Is that right?

SANDY. That's right.—And brilliant at it.

MIKE. So I've heard tell. I seem to have read about him first back in '35 or '36.—Up from the bottom, wasn't he?

SANDY. Just exactly—and of the mines.

MIKE. Reorganized the entire works?

SANDY. He did.

MIKE. National hero, new model: makes drooping family incomes to revive again. Anthracite, sweet anthracite.—How did your sister happen to meet him?

SANDY. She and I went up a month ago to look things over.

MIKE. I see. And was it instant?

SANDY. Immediate.

MIKE. Good for her. He must be quite a guy.—Which side of this—er—fine aboriginal family does she resemble most, would you say? [SANDY looks at him, rises.]

SANDY. The histories of both are in the library: I'll get them out for you. I'll also see if I can round up some of the Living Members.

LIZ. They don't know about us, do they? [SANDY, in the doorway, stops and turns.]

SANDY.—Pleasanter not, don't you think?

LIZ. Much.

SANDY. That's what I thought—also what Kidd thought. [Suddenly MIKE rises.]

MIKE. Look here, Lord—

SANDY. Yes—?

MIKE. Why don't you throw us out? [SANDY laughs shortly, then goes out.]

SANDY. I hope you'll never know!

LIZ. Meaning what?

MIKE. Search me.

LIZ. Maybe Der Kidder has been up to his little tricks.

MIKE. If only I could get away from his damned paper—

LIZ. It's Sidney himself you can't get away from, dear. [She begins to tour the room with her camera.]

MIKE. I tried to resign again on the phone this morning.

LIZ.—Knickknacks—gimcracks—signed photographs! Wouldn't you know you'd have to be as rich as the Lords to live in a dump like this? [Sees the portrait over the mantel.] Save me—it's a Gilbert Stuart!

MIKE. A what?

LIZ. Catch me, Mike!

MIKE. Faint to the left, will you? [He returns to the typewritten cards.] "First husband, C. K.—"—Can you imagine what a guy named "C. K. Dexter Haven" must be like?

LIZ. "Macaulay Connor" is not such a homespun tag, my pet.

MIKE. I've been called Mike ever since I can remember.

LIZ. Well, maybe Dexter is "Ducky" to his friends.

MIKE. I wouldn't doubt it.—But I wonder what the "C. K." is for—

LIZ. Maybe it's Pennsylvania Dutch for "William Penn."

MIKE. "C. K. Dexter Haven"—God!

LIZ. I knew a plain Joe Smith once. He was only a clerk in a hardware store, but he was an absolute louse.

MIKE.—Also he plays polo. Also designs and races sailboats. "Class" boats, I think they call them. Very upper class, of course.

LIZ. Don't despair. He's out, and Kittredge, man of the people, is in.

MIKE. From all reports, quite a comer too. Political timber.—Poor fellow, I wonder how he fell for it.

## The Philadelphia Story

LIZ. I imagine she's a young lady who knows what she wants when she wants it.

MIKE. The young, rich, rapacious American female—there's no other country where she exists.

LIZ. I'll admit the idea of *her* scares even me.—Would I change places with her, for all her wealth and beauty? Boy! Just ask me!

MIKE. I know how I'm going to begin. [*He leans back on the sofa, closes his eyes, and declaims.*] “—So much for Historical Philadelphia, so much for Industrial. Now, Gentle Reader, consider an entire section of American Society which, closely following the English tradition, lives on the land, but in a new sense. It is not the land that provides the living, it is—”

LIZ. You're ahead of yourself. Wait till you do your documentation.

MIKE. I'm tired. Kidd is a slave driver. I wish I was home in bed. Also I'm hungry. Tell four footmen to call me in time for lunch. [*DINAH re-enters from the Porch, her manner now very much that of a woman of the world. She rises upon her toes like a ballet dancer and advances toward them.*]

DINAH. Oh—how do you do?—Friends of Alexander's, are you not? [*MIKE rises.*]

MIKE. How do you do.—Why yes, we—

DINAH. I am Dinah Lord. My real name is Diana, but my sister changed it.

LIZ. I'm Elizabeth Imbrie and this is Macaulay Connor. It's awfully nice of— [*DINAH extends an arched hand to each.*]

DINAH. *Enchantée de vous voir. Enchantée de faire votre connaissance.*—I spoke French before I spoke English. My early childhood was spent in Paris, where my father worked in a bank—the House of Morgan.

LIZ. Really?

DINAH. *C'est vrai—absolument!* [*She runs up to the piano, leaping a low stool as she goes.*] Can you play the piano? I can. And sing at the same time. Listen— [*She plays and sings.*] “Pepper Sauce Woman, Pepper Sauce Woman—” [*Liz speaks lowly to MIKE.*]

LIZ. What is this?

MIKE. An idiot, probably. They happen in the best of families, especially in the best.

DINAH.

“—Oh, what a shame; she has lost her name

Don't know who to blame, walkin' along in Shango Batchelor.”

[*She stops singing and continues in a dreamy voice:*] The Bahamas—how well I remember them.—Those perfumed nights—the flowers—the native wines. I was there, once, on a little trip with Leopold Stokowski. [*TRACY comes in from the Porch. She has changed into a rather demure dress, high in neck and ample in skirt.*]

TRACY. You were there with your governess, after the whooping cough. [*DINAH gestures airily.*]

DINAH.—My sister Tracy. Greetings, Sister.

TRACY. Mother wants to see you at once. At once! [*DINAH rises from the piano.*]

DINAH. You've got on my hair ribbon.

TRACY. Your face is still dirty. [*As DINAH passes her, TRACY gives her one, deft, smart spank, then, as DINAH goes out into the Hall, comes up to MIKE and LIZ, cool, collected and charming, all Sweetness and Light.*] It's awfully nice having you here. [*She shakes hands with them.*] I do hope you'll stay for my wedding.

LIZ. We'd like to very much.

MIKE. In fact, that was our idea.

## Twentieth Century Blues

TRACY. I'm so pleased that it occurred to you. [*She indicates the sofa. They seat themselves there and TRACY takes a chair facing them.*] The house is in rather a mess, of course. We all have to huddle here, and overflow onto the porch.—I hope your rooms are comfortable. [*MIKE takes out a pack of cigarettes.*]

LIZ. Oh, very, thanks.

TRACY. Anything you want, ask Mary or Elsie. They're magic. [*She holds a cigarette box out to them. Each takes one. LIZ's camera catches her eye.*] What a cunning little camera. [*MIKE has struck a match. He sees that TRACY is holding an automatic lighter toward him as she talks to LIZ.—He slowly bends forward to accept a light for his cigarette, then blows his match out. TRACY graciously smiles at him.*]

LIZ. It's a Contax. I'm afraid I'm rather a nuisance with it. [*She accepts a light from the lighter.*]

TRACY. But, you couldn't be: I hope you'll take loads. Dear Papá and Mamá aren't allowing any reporters in—that is, except for little Mr. Grace, who does the social news. [*To MIKE.*] Can you imagine a grown-up man, having to sink so low?

MIKE. It does seem pretty bad.

TRACY. People have always been so kind about letting us live our simple and uneventful little life here unmolested. Of course, after my divorce last year—but I expect that always happens, and is more or less deserved. Dear Papá was quite angry, though, and swore he'd never let another reporter inside the gate. He thought some of their methods were a trifle underhanded.—You're a writer, aren't you, Mr. Connor?

MIKE. In a manner of speaking.

TRACY. Sandy told me. I've sent for your

books. "Macaulay Connor"—What's the "Macaulay" for?

MIKE. My father taught English history. I'm "Mike" to my friends.

TRACY.—Of whom you have many, I'm sure. English history has always fascinated me. Cromwell—Bloody Mary, John the Bastard.—Where did he teach? I mean your father—

MIKE. In the high school in South Bend, Indiana.

TRACY. "South Bend"! It sounds like dancing, doesn't it? You must have had a most happy childhood there.

MIKE. It was terrific.

TRACY. I'm so glad.

MIKE. I don't mean it that way.

TRACY. I'm so sorry. Why?

MIKE. Largely due to the lack of the wherewithal, I guess.

TRACY. But that doesn't always cause unhappiness, does it?—not if you're the right kind of man. George Kittredge, my fiancé, never had anything either, but he—. Are either of you married?

MIKE. No.

LIZ. I—er—that is, no.

TRACY. You mean *you* were, but now you're divorced?

LIZ. Well, the fact is—

TRACY. Suds—you can't mean you're ashamed of it!

LIZ. Of course I'm not ashamed of it. [*MIKE is staring at her.*]

MIKE. Wha-at?

LIZ. It was ages ago, when I was a mere kid, in Duluth.

MIKE. Good Lord, Liz—you never told me you were—

LIZ. You never asked.

MIKE. I know, but—

LIZ. Joe Smith. Hardware.

MIKE. Liz, you're the damnedest girl.

LIZ. I think I'm sweet. [*MIKE rises,*

## The Philadelphia Story

turns once around the sofa and seats himself again.]

TRACY. Duluth—that must be a lovely spot. It's west of here, isn't it?

LIZ. Sort of.—But occasionally we get the breezes.

TRACY. Is this your first visit in Philadelphia?

LIZ. Just about.

TRACY. It's a quaint old place, don't you think? I suppose it's affected somewhat by being the only really big city that's near New York.

LIZ. I think that's a very good point to make about it.

TRACY.—Though I suppose you consider us somewhat provincial.

LIZ. Not at all, I assure you.

TRACY. Odd customs, and such. Where the scrapples eat Biddle on Sunday. Of course it is very old—Philadelphia, I mean; the scrapple is fresh weekly. How old are you, Mr. Connor?

MIKE. I was thirty last month.

TRACY. Two books isn't much for a man of thirty. I don't mean to criticize. You probably have other interests outside your work.

MIKE. None.—Unless— [*He looks at Liz and smiles.*]

TRACY. How sweet! Are you living together?

MIKE. Why, er—that is—

LIZ. That's an odd question, I must say!

TRACY. Why?

LIZ. Well—it just is.

TRACY. I don't see why. I think it's very interesting. [*She leans forward seriously, elbow on knee, chin on hand.*] Miss Imbrie—don't you agree that all this marrying and giving in marriage is the damndest gyp that's ever been put over on an unsuspecting public?

MIKE [*to Liz*]. Can she be human?

TRACY. Please, Mr. Connor!—I asked Miss Imbrie a question.

LIZ. No. The fact is, I don't.

TRACY. Good. Nor do I. That's why I'm putting my chin out for the second time tomorrow. [*GEORGE, off stage, Left, calls "Tracy." She rises and moves toward the Porch.*] Here's the lucky man now. I'll bring him right in and put him on view—a one-man exhibition.—In here, George! In here, my dear! [*She goes out, Liz rises and turns to MIKE.*]

LIZ. My God—who's doing the interviewing here?

MIKE. She's a lot more than I counted on.

LIZ. Do you suppose she's caught on somehow?

MIKE. No. She's just a hellion.

LIZ. I'm beginning to feel the size of a pinhead.

MIKE. Don't let her throw you.

LIZ. Do you want to take over?

MIKE. I want to go home. [*TRACY re-enters with GEORGE KITTREDGE, aged 32, and brings him up to them.*]

TRACY. Miss Imbrie—Mr. Connor—Mr. Kittredge, my beau.—Friends of Sandy's, George.

GEORGE. Any friend of Sandy's— [*He shakes hands with them.*]

LIZ. How do you do?

MIKE. How are you?

GEORGE. Fine as silk, thanks.

LIZ. You certainly look it.

GEORGE. Thanks! I've shaken quite a lot of coal dust from my feet in the last day or two.

TRACY. Isn't he beautiful? Isn't it wonderful what a little soap and water will do?

MIKE. Didn't I read a piece about you in the *Nation* a while ago?

GEORGE. Quite a while ago: I've been



## Twentieth Century Blues

resting on my laurels since that—and a couple of others.

MIKE. Quite a neat piece of work—anticipating the Guffey Coal Act the way you did.—Or do I remember straight?

GEORGE. Anyone should have foreseen that. I was just lucky.

LIZ. A becoming modesty.

GEORGE. That's nothing to what's yet to be done with Labor relations.

TRACY. You ought to see him with the men—they simply adore him.

GEORGE. Oh—come on, Tracy!

TRACY. Oh, but they do! Never in my life will I forget that first night I saw you: all those wonderful faces, and the torch lights, and the way his voice boomed—

GEORGE. You see, I'm really a spell-binder. That's the way I got her.

TRACY. Except it was me who got you!—I'm going to put these two at the bridal table, in place of the Grants.

GEORGE. That's a good idea.

TRACY. George, it won't rain, will it?—Promise me it won't rain.

GEORGE. Tracy, I'll see to that personally.

TRACY. I almost believe you could.

MIKE. I guess this must be love.

GEORGE. Your guess is correct, Mr. Connor.

TRACY. I'm just his faithful Old Dog Tray.

GEORGE. Give me your paw. [*She presents her hand.*]

TRACY. You've got it. [*He takes it and kisses it. MARGARET enters from the Parlor, followed by DINAH. DINAH remains in the doorway. MARGARET goes directly to LIZ and MIKE.*]

MARGARET. How do you do? We're so happy to have you. Forgive me for not coming in sooner, but things are in such a state. I'd no idea that a simple country

wedding could involve so much. [*She crosses to TRACY and TRACY to her. They beam fatuously upon one another.*] My little girl—[*She pats her face, then turns back to LIZ.*]—I do hope you'll be comfortable. Those rooms are inclined to be hot in this weather.—Aren't you pretty, my dear! [*SANDY comes in from the Hall.*] Look at the way she wears her hair, Tracy. Isn't it pretty?

TRACY. Mighty fine.

MARGARET. I do wish my husband might be here to greet you, but we expect him presently. He's been detained in New York on business for that lovely Tina Mara. You know her work?

LIZ. Only vaguely!

MARGARET. So talented—and such a lovely person! But like so many artists—no business head, none whatever. [*She gives TRACY a knowing smile. TRACY and SANDY smile. SANDY then smirks for TRACY's sole benefit. EDWARD comes in from the Hall, carrying a tray with a carafe of sherry and several glasses. THOMAS follows him. EDWARD pours, THOMAS serves. MARGARET beams upon GEORGE.*] Good morning, George!

GEORGE. Good morning, Mrs. Lord.

MARGARET. And this is my youngest daughter, Diana—[*DINAH curtseys.*]

MIKE. I think we've met. [*THOMAS gives MARGARET a glass of sherry.*]

MARGARET. Thank you, Thomas. [*SANDY stretches himself out in an easy chair.*]

SANDY. Now let's all relax, and throw ourselves into things. Hi, George!

GEORGE. Hello, Sandy—Welcome home! [*All take sherry, with the exception of TRACY and DINAH.*]

MARGARET. After lunch Sandy must show you some of the sights—the model dairy, and the stables, and the chicken farm—and perhaps there'll be time to run

## The Philadelphia Story

you out to some other places on the Main Line—Devon, St. Davids, Bryn Mawr, where my daughter Tracy went to college—

DINAH. Till she got bounced out on her—

MARGARET.—Dinah! [UNCLE WILLIE re-enters from the Parlor.]

UNCLE WILLIE. It's a pretty kettle of fish when a man has to wait two mortal hours— [Suddenly TRACY runs to him with her arms out.]

TRACY. Papá!—Dear Papá— [She embraces him warmly.] Didn't the car meet you? [UNCLE WILLIE is completely bewildered.]

WILLIE. The car?

TRACY. You angel—to drop everything and get here in time for lunch!—Isn't he, Mamá?

MARGARET. In—indeed he is. [UNCLE WILLIE stares at them.]

UNCLE WILLIE. I'm not one to jump at conclusions, but—

TRACY. These are our friends, Mr. Connor and Miss Imbrie, Father.—They're here for the wedding.

MIKE and LIZ. How do you do, Mr. Lord?

UNCLE WILLIE. Dashed fine. How are you?

SANDY. Hi, Pops!

UNCLE WILLIE.—Alexander.

DINAH. Welcome back, Daddy!

UNCLE WILLIE. Dinah—Kittredge— [He turns to MARGARET and bows.] Margaret, my sweet. [THOMAS comes down to his left with a glass of sherry. UNCLE WILLIE tosses it off and returns the glass.]

TRACY. Mother, don't you think you ought to explain the new arrangement to Father before lunch?

MARGARET. Why—yes—I think I'd best. [She slips her arm through UNCLE WIL-

LIE's and leads him to the desk which stands between the Porch doors.] See here—here is the list now—Seth! [In from the Porch comes DEXTER HAVEN, 28. SANDY sees him and exclaims.]

SANDY. Holy Cats! [MARGARET turns quickly.]

MARGARET. Dexter Haven!

DEXTER. Hello, friends and enemies. I came the short way, across the fields.

MARGARET. Well, this is a surprise.

GEORGE. I should think it is. [DEXTER kisses MARGARET lightly upon the cheek.]

DEXTER. Hello, you sweet thing.

MARGARET. Now you go right home at once!

UNCLE WILLIE. Remove yourself, young man!

DEXTER. But I've been invited. [He shakes UNCLE WILLIE's hand.] How are you, sir?

UNCLE WILLIE. No better, no worse. Get along.

DEXTER. Hello, Sandy. [They shake hands.]

SANDY. How are you, boy?

DEXTER. Never better. In fact, it's immoral how good I feel.

DINAH. What—what brings you here, Mr. Haven?

DEXTER. Dinah, my angel! [He kisses her cheek.] Why, she's turned into a ravishing beauty! [He turns to TRACY.]—Awfully sweet and thoughtful of you to ask me to lunch, Tray.

TRACY. Not at all.—Extra place, Thomas.

THOMAS. Yes, Miss Tracy. [He and EDWARD go out, into the Hall. UNCLE WILLIE and MARGARET talk inaudibly at the desk. TRACY gestures toward MIKE and LIZ.]

TRACY. Miss Imbrie—Mr. Connor—my former husband, whose name for the moment escapes me.

## Twentieth Century Blues

DEXTER. How do you do?

LIZ. How do you do?

MIKE. How do you do?

DEXTER.—Of course I intended to come anyway, but it did make it pleasanter.—Hello, Kittredge.

GEORGE. How are you, Haven? [DEXTER peers at him.]

DEXTER. What's the matter? You don't look as well as when I last saw you. [*He pats his arm sympathetically.*] Poor fellow—I know just how you feel. [*He turns to TRACY, gazes at her fondly.*] Redhead— isn't *she* in the pink, though?—You don't look old enough to marry anyone, even for the first time—you never did! She needs trouble to mature her, Kittredge. Give her lots of it.

GEORGE. I'm afraid she can't count on me for that.

DEXTER. No? Too bad.—Sometimes, for your own sake, I think you should have stuck to me longer, Red. [TRACY goes to GEORGE and takes his arm.]

TRACY. I thought it was for life, but the nice Judge gave me a full pardon.

DEXTER. That's the kind of talk I like to hear: no bitterness, no recrimination—just a good quick left to the jaw.

GEORGE. Very funny. [THOMAS reappears in the Hall doorway.]

THOMAS. Luncheon is served, Madam.

MARGARET. Thank you, Thomas. [*He goes out. UNCLE WILLIE advances from the desk.*]

UNCLE WILLIE. I don't suppose a man ever had a better or finer family. [*He turns and takes MARGARET's arm.*] I wake in the night and say to myself—"Seth, you lucky dog. What have you done to deserve it?"

MARGARET. And what have you? [*Arm in arm they go out into the Hall.*]

TRACY. Do you mind if I go in with Mr. Connor, Miss Imbrie?

LIZ. Why, not in the least. [SANDY offers LIZ his arm.]

SANDY. Sandy's your boy!

TRACY [*takes MIKE's arm*].—Because I think he's such an interesting man.

GEORGE. Come on, Dinah, I draw you, I guess.

DINAH. Dexter—

DEXTER [*to GEORGE*]. Isn't snatching one of my girls enough, you cad?

GEORGE. You're a very bright fellow, Haven. I'll hire you.

MIKE [*to TRACY*]. No wonder you want to get away from all this.

TRACY. That's very insulting—but consistently interesting. We must talk more. [*They are all approaching the Hall when SETH LORD, 50, appears in the Porch doorway, hat in hand, a light topcoat over his arm.*]

SETH. I don't know how welcome I am, but after Sandy's note, I thought the least I could do was to— [DINAH starts down the Hall steps to him but is stopped by TRACY, who suddenly cries out to SETH.]

TRACY. Uncle Willie! [*She turns to others.*] Please go on in to lunch, everyone, I want a word with Uncle Willie. [*They go out. TRACY crosses the room and faces her father.*]

SETH. Well, daughter?

TRACY. Well?

SETH. Still Justice, with her shining sword—eh? Who's on the spot?

TRACY. We are; thanks to you—Uncle Willie.

CURTAIN

## Philadelphia Story

### ACT II

#### SCENE I

[The Porch, which is more like a room than a porch. Entrance from the Sitting Room is through the glass doors at back and to the Library, through glass doors at Stage Left; to the Garden, down broad stone steps from the Porch and along a gravel path past shrubbery to Left and Right. The open side of the Porch is shielded with latticework, and there are pots of geraniums on the steps. Early evening, Friday. The sky has cleared. MIKE is in a chair on the Porch, making additional notes. LIZ is seated on the steps, reloading her camera.]

LIZ. I may need more film.

MIKE. I may need more paper.

LIZ. There's a cousin Joanna who's definitely crazy.

MIKE. Who told you?

LIZ. Dinah.

MIKE. Dinah should know.

LIZ. Where is she now? I want some more shots of her, while it's still light.

MIKE. She's out schooling a horse somewhere. It's the horses that get the schooling hereabouts. Did you shoot the old Tycoon milking his cows?

LIZ. Several times. He shot one at me, but he missed.

MIKE. Caption: "Seventy Times Seven Fat Kine Has He." [He consults his notes.] "George Kittredge, Important Official, Important Company. Controlling interest owned by Seth Lord."

LIZ. What a coincidence and will wonders never cease?

MIKE. I'm inclined to like Kittredge—I can see how she fell for him. I think he's in a tough spot, with Haven prowling around, though.

LIZ. Is a sinister fellow, Dexter.

MIKE. Is very.—But George is interesting. Get him on coal some time.

LIZ. I'd rather have him on toast.

MIKE. Answer me honestly, Liz: What right has a girl like Tracy Lord to exist?

LIZ. Politically, socially, or economically?

MIKE. But what place has she got in the world today? Come the Revolution and she'd be the first to go.

LIZ. Sure: right out under the Red General's arm.

MIKE. She's a new one on me. Maybe Philadelphia produces a different brand of monkey. [LIZ looks at him keenly.]

LIZ. You're a funny one, Mike.

MIKE. Why?

LIZ. Use the name "Wanamaker" in a sentence.

MIKE. I bite.

LIZ. I met a girl this morning. I hate her, but I—

MIKE. I get you, but you're wrong. You couldn't be wronger. Women like that bore the pants off me.

LIZ. For a writer, you use your figures of speech most ineptly. You know, I wish they knew why we were here. They're all such sweet innocents, it makes me feel like— [UNCLE WILLIE and SETH enter from the Garden down Right.]

UNCLE WILLIE. Would you accept this perfect rose, Miss Imbrie?

LIZ. Why, thank you, Mr. Lord. It's a beauty.

SETH. Miss Imbrie is amused at something.

LIZ. I'm sorry, Mr. Tracy, but it's so funny, you being uncle and nephew. Could I have a picture of you together?

UNCLE WILLIE. Certainly! [He slips his arm through SETH's.] Now then, stand up

## Twentieth Century Blues

straight, Uncle Willie. He is younger than I. It was a matter of half-sisters marrying stepbrothers.

LIZ. I see. That is, I think I do. [*She snaps a picture.*]

UNCLE WILLIE. No incest, however.

LIZ. Of course not. [*And snaps another.*]

UNCLE WILLIE. There have been other things, however. [*He looks at SETH.*] Uncle Willie—I'm thinking of asking that little dancer, Tina Mara, to come down and dance for the wedding guests tomorrow. Do you think it's a good idea?

SETH. Excellent. It might put an end to the ridiculous gossip about you and her.

UNCLE WILLIE. Is there gossip?

SETH. There seems to be.

UNCLE WILLIE. Is it ridiculous?

SETH. All gossip is ridiculous. [*SANDY comes from the Library at Left and crosses the Porch to the Sitting-Room door.*]

SANDY. Look alive, men! Time to dress!

SETH. Right you are. Thanks, Sandy—  
[*He goes up the steps and over the Porch into the Sitting Room. SANDY follows him.*]

UNCLE WILLIE. Miss Imbrie, as a camera-fiend, I think I have another interesting subject for you.

LIZ. Will I have time?

UNCLE WILLIE. Time is an illusion. Come with me, please. [*He offers his arm, which she takes gingerly.*] It's part of the old house, a little removed from it.

LIZ. But what?

UNCLE WILLIE. An ancient granite privy, of superb design—a dream of loveliness.

LIZ.—At sunset—idyllic! [*Liz and UNCLE WILLIE go out into the Garden. MIKE pockets his notebook and moves toward the Sitting Room. Suddenly TRACY appears in the Library doorway. She wears a bright-colored dressing gown over the foundation for a white evening dress and*

*has a book in her hand, her finger marking a place toward the end of it.*]

TRACY. Please wait a minute.

MIKE. With pleasure. [*He stops where he is. She goes to him, turns him about and looks at him wonderingly.*] What's the matter?

TRACY. I've been reading these stories. They're so damned beautiful.

MIKE. You like? Thanks—

TRACY. Why, Connor, they're almost poetry. [*He laughs shortly.*]

MIKE. Don't fool yourself: they are!

TRACY. I can't make you out at all, now.

MIKE. Really? I thought I was easy.

TRACY. So did I, but you're not. You talk so big and tough—and then you write like this. Which is which?

MIKE. I guess I'm both.

TRACY. No—I believe you put the toughness on, to save your skin.

MIKE. You think?

TRACY. Yes. I know a little about that—

MIKE. Do you?

TRACY. Quite a lot. [*They look at each other for a moment. Then TRACY laughs a little embarrassedly and glances away.*] It—the book—it was just such a complete—hell of a surprise, that's all.

MIKE. Yes—it seems you do.

TRACY. What?

MIKE. Know about it.

TRACY. The one called "With The Rich and Mighty"—I think I liked it best.

MIKE. I got it from a Spanish peasant's proverb—"With The Rich and Mighty, always a little patience." [*TRACY laughs.*]

TRACY. Good! [*She seats herself, gazes again at the book.*] Tell me something, will you? When you can do a thing like this, how can you possibly do anything else?

MIKE. Such as what?

## The Philadelphia Story

TRACY. You said after lunch—what was it you said? "Cheap stuff for expensive magazines."

MIKE. Did I?

TRACY. Yes. You did. You said you spent most of your time that way. [MIKE seats himself, facing her.]

MIKE. Practically all. Why? What about it?

TRACY. I can't understand it. And I like to understand things.

MIKE. You'll never believe it, but there are people in this world who have to earn their living.

TRACY. Of course! But people buy books, don't they?

MIKE. Sure they do: they even read them.

TRACY. Well, then!

MIKE. That one represents two solid years' work. It netted Connor something under six hundred dollars.

TRACY. But that shouldn't be!

MIKE.—Only unhappily it is. [There is a pause.]

TRACY. And what about your Miss Imbrie?

MIKE. Miss Imbrie is in somewhat the same fix. She's a born painter, and might be an important one. But Miss Imbrie must eat. Also, she prefers a roof over her head to being constantly out in the rain and snow. [TRACY ponders this.]

TRACY. Food and a roof—food and a roof—

MIKE. Those charming essentials.

TRACY [suddenly]. Listen: I've got an idea! [She rises, goes to him, stands over him.] Listen: I've got the most marvelous little house in Unionville. It's up on a hill, with a view that would knock you silly. I'm never there except in the hunting season, and not much then, and I'd be so happy to know it was of some use to

someone. [She moves swiftly across the Porch and back again.] There's a brook and a small lake, no size really, and a patch of woods, and in any kind of weather, it's the— [She is down the steps now, looking up at the sky.] —And look at that sky now, will you! Suddenly it's clear as clear! It's going to be fine tomorrow! It's going to be fair! Good for you, God! [She glances down the path.] Hell! [And quickly returns to the Porch.] Someone's coming—someone I don't want to be alone with. Stand by for a couple of minutes, will you?

MIKE. Certainly—if you like.

TRACY.—You will think about the house, won't you?

MIKE. Why, it's terribly nice of you, but—

TRACY. Don't think I'd come trooping in every minute, because I wouldn't. I'd never come, except when expressly asked to.

MIKE. It isn't that.

TRACY. What is it?

MIKE. Well, you see—er—you see the idea of artists having a patron has more or less gone out, and— [She looks at him steadily.]

TRACY. I see. [Then waits a moment.] That wasn't especially kind of you, Mr. Connor. There's no need to rub our general uselessness in.

MIKE. I'm afraid I don't get you.

TRACY. Don't bother. I'm sorry to have seemed—patronizing.

MIKE. I didn't quite mean—

TRACY. Please don't bother, really. [DEXTER comes in down the Garden path. He carries a small picture, wrapped in tissue paper.]

DEXTER. Hello.

TRACY. Hello. Fancy seeing you here.

*Twentieth Century Blues*

[*He mounts the Porch and goes to the table.*]

DEXTER. Orange juice? Certainly!—

TRACY. You're sure you don't want something stronger? I'll ring if you like. [*He pours himself a glass of orange juice from a pitcher.*]

DEXTER. Not now, thanks. This is fine.

TRACY. Don't tell me you've forsaken your beloved whisky-and-whiskies—

DEXTER. No, indeed. I've just changed their color, that's all. I go in for the pale pastel shades now. I find they're more becoming. [*He looks at MIKE over his glass.*] We met at lunch, didn't we?

MIKE. Yes, I seem to remember. Connor's my name.

DEXTER.—The writer—of course! Do you drink, Mr. Connor?

MIKE. A little. Why?

DEXTER. Not to excess?

MIKE. Not often.

DEXTER.—And a writer! It's extraordinary. I thought all writers drank to excess, and beat their wives. I expect that at one time *I* secretly wanted to be a writer.

TRACY. Dexter, would you mind doing something for me? [*He replaces the glass upon the table and puts the picture beside it.*]

DEXTER. Anything. What?

TRACY. Get the hell out of here.

DEXTER. Oh, no, I couldn't do that. That wouldn't be fair to you. You need me too much.

TRACY. Would you mind telling me just what it is you're hanging around for? [*MIKE moves toward the Library door.*] No—please don't go! I'd honestly much prefer it if you wouldn't. [*Reluctantly MIKE seats himself near the door.*]

DEXTER. So should I. Do stay, Mr. Connor. As a writer this ought to be right up your street.

TRACY. [*to MIKE*]. Miss not a word! [*DEXTER gazes at her.*]

DEXTER. Honestly, you never looked better in your life. You're getting a fine tawny look.

TRACY. Oh, we're going to talk about me, are we? Goody.

DEXTER.—It's astonishing what money can do for people, don't you agree, Mr. Connor? Not too much, you know—just more than enough. Particularly for girls. Look at Tracy: there's never been a blow that hasn't been softened for her. There'll never be one that won't be softened. Why, it even changed her shape—she was a dumpy little thing originally.

TRACY.—Only as it happens, I'm not interested in myself, for the moment. What interests me now, is what, if any, your real point is, in—

DEXTER. Not interested in yourself? My dear, you're fascinated! You're far and away your favorite person in the world.

TRACY. Dexter, in case you don't know it, I—!

DEXTER. Shall I go on—?

TRACY. Oh, yes, please do, by all means— [*She seats herself.*]

DEXTER. Of course, she is kindness itself, Mr. Connor—

TRACY.—Itself, Mr. Connor.

DEXTER. She is generous to a fault—that is, except to other people's faults. For instance, she never had the slightest sympathy toward nor understanding of what used to be known as my deep and gorgeous thirst.

TRACY. That was your problem!

DEXTER. It was the problem of a young man of exceptionally high spirit, who drank to slow down that damned engine he'd found nothing yet to do with.—I refer to my mind. You took on that problem with me, when you took me.—You

## *The Philadelphia Story*

were no helpmate there, Tracy—you were a scold.

TRACY. It was disgusting. It made you so unattractive.

DEXTER. A weakness—sure. And strength is her religion, Mr. Connor. She is a goddess, without patience for any kind of human imperfection. And when I gradually discovered that my relation to her was expected to be not that of a loving husband and a good companion, but— [*He turns away from her.*] Oh—never mind—

TRACY. Say it!

DEXTER.—But that of a kind of high priest to a virgin goddess, then my drinks grew more frequent and deeper in hue, that's all.

TRACY. I never considered you as that, nor myself!

DEXTER. You did without knowing it. And the night that you got drunk on champagne, and climbed out on the roof and stood there naked, with your arms out to the moon, wailing like a banshee— [*MIKE, with a startled expression, moves sideways out into the Library.*]

TRACY. I told you I never had the slightest recollection of doing any such thing!

DEXTER. I know; you drew a blank. You wanted to.—Mr. Connor, what would you say in the case of— [*He turns and sees that MIKE has gone.*]

TRACY. He's a reporter, incidentally. He's doing us for *Destiny*.

DEXTER. Sandy told me. A pity we can't supply photographs of you on the roof.

TRACY. Honestly, the fuss you made over that silly, childish—!

DEXTER. It was enormously important, and most revealing. The moon is also a goddess, chaste and virginal.

TRACY. Stop using those foul words! We were married nearly a year, weren't we?

DEXTER. Marriage doesn't change a true case like yours, my dear. It's an affair of the spirit—not of the flesh.

TRACY. Dexter, what are you trying to make me out as?

DEXTER. Tracy, what do you fancy yourself as?

TRACY. I don't know that I fancy myself as anything.

DEXTER. When I read you were going to marry Kittredge, I couldn't believe it. How in the world can you even think of it? [*She turns on him.*]

TRACY. I love him, that's why! As I never even began to love you!

DEXTER. It may be true, but I doubt it. I think it's just a swing from me, and what I represent—but I think it's too violent a swing. That's why I came on. Kittredge is no great tower of strength, you know, Tracy. He's just a tower.

TRACY. You've known him how long?—half a day.

DEXTER. I knew him for two days two years ago, the time I went up to the fields with your father, but half a day would have done, I think.

TRACY. It's just personal, then—

DEXTER. Purely and completely.

TRACY. You couldn't possibly understand him or his qualities. I shouldn't expect you to.

DEXTER. I suppose when you come right down to it, Tray, it just offends my vanity to have anyone who was even remotely my wife, marry so obviously beneath her.

TRACY. "Beneath" me! How dare you—any of you—in this day and age, use such a—?

DEXTER. I'm talking about differences in mind and imagination. You could marry Mac, the night watchman, and I'd cheer for you.

TRACY. And what's wrong with George?



## Twentieth Century Blues

DEXTER. Nothing—utterly nothing. He's a wizard at his job, and I'm sure he is honest, sober, and industrious. He's just not for you.

TRACY. He *is* for me—he's a great man and a good man: already he's of national importance.

DEXTER. Good Lord—you sound like *Destiny* talking.—Well, whatever he is, you'll have to stick, Tray. He'll give you no out as I did.

TRACY. I won't require one.

DEXTER. I suppose you'd still be attractive to any man of spirit, though. There's something engaging about it, this virgin goddess business, something more challenging to the male than the more obvious charms.

TRACY. Really?

DEXTER. Oh, yes! We're very vain, you know—"This citadel can and shall be taken—and I'm just the boy to do it."

TRACY. You seem quite contemptuous of me, all of a sudden.

DEXTER. Not of you, Red, never of you. You could be the damndest, finest woman on this earth. If I'm contemptuous of anything, it's of something in you you either can't help, or make no attempt to: your so-called "strength"—your prejudice against weakness—your blank intolerance—

TRACY. Is that all?

DEXTER. That's the gist of it; because you'll never be a first-class woman or a first-class human being, till you have learned to have some small regard for human frailty. It's a pity your own foot can't slip a little some time—but no, your sense of inner divinity won't allow it. The goddess must and shall remain intact.—You know, I think there are more of you around than people realize. You're a special class of American Female now—the

Married Maidens.—And of Type Philadelphiaensis, you're the absolute tops, my dear.

TRACY. Damn your soul, Dext, if you say another—! [*He sees GEORGE coming in from the Library at Left.*]

DEXTER. I'm through, Tracy—for the moment I've said my say. [*GEORGE smiles at them with a great attempt at good humor.*]

GEORGE. I suppose I ought to object to this twosome.

DEXTER. That would be most objectionable. Well, any time either of you wants more advice from me— [*He moves toward the steps.*]

GEORGE. When we do, we'll give you a ring, Haven.

DEXTER. Do that, will you? You'll find that I have a most sympathetic and understanding ear— [*He turns to TRACY.*] I left you a little wedding present there on the table, Red—I'm sorry I hadn't any ribbon to tie it up with. [*Then goes out down the path.*]

GEORGE. You see—it's no use even attempting to be friendly.

TRACY. Certainly not. You were a dear to try. Please don't mind him. [*DINAH comes in from the Garden, down the opposite path. She mounts the Porch and crosses to the Sitting-Room door.*]

DINAH [*to TRACY*]. You got taken when you bought that roan. She's parrot-jawed.

TRACY. Get into a tub. You're revolting.

DINAH. What's more, she swallows wind by the bucket.

TRACY. Where's Miss Imbrie? Wasn't she with you?

DINAH. No. She's gone to the privy with Uncle Willie. [*She goes out, into the Sitting Room. TRACY picks up the package left by DEXTER, scrutinizes it, shakes it.*]

TRACY. It's anyone's guess what this

## The Philadelphia Story

might be. [*She unwraps it.*] It's—why it's a photograph of the "True Love."

GEORGE.—The?—What's that?

TRACY. A boat he designed—and built, practically. We sailed her down the coast of Maine and back, the summer we were married. My, she was yare.

GEORGE. "Yare?" What does that mean?

TRACY. It means—oh, what does it mean?—Easy to handle—quick to the helm—fast—bright—everything a boat should be. [*She gazes at the photograph for a moment without speaking, then drops it upon the table.*]—And the hell with it.

GEORGE. Rather bad taste, I'd say, giving you that.

TRACY. Dexter never concerns himself much with taste.

GEORGE. How'd you ever happen to marry a fellow like that, Tracy?

TRACY. Oh, I don't know—I expect it was kind of a hangover from childhood days. We grew up together, you know.

GEORGE. I see—propinquity.

TRACY. Oh, George—to get away—to get away—I! Somehow to feel useful in the world—

GEORGE. Useful?—I'm going to build you an ivory tower with my own two hands.

TRACY. Like fun you are.

GEORGE. You mean you've been in one too long?

TRACY. I mean that, and a lot of things.

GEORGE. I'm going to make a grand life for us, dear—and you can help, all right.

TRACY. I hope I can.

GEORGE. From now on we'll both stop wasting time on unimportant people.

TRACY. That's all right with me.

GEORGE. Our little house on the river up there—I'd like people to consider it an honor to be asked there.

TRACY. Why an honor, especially?

GEORGE. We're going to represent something, Tracy—something straight and sound and fine.—And then perhaps young Mr. Haven may be somewhat less condescending. [*She looks at him.*]

TRACY. George—you don't really mind him, do you? I mean the fact of him—

GEORGE. The?—I don't see what you mean, Tracy.

TRACY. I mean that—you know—that he ever was—was my lord and master— That we ever were—

GEORGE. I don't believe he ever was—not really. I don't believe anyone ever was, or ever will be. That's the wonderful thing about you, Tracy. [*She looks at him startled.*]

TRACY. What? How—?

GEORGE. You're like some marvelous, distant—oh, queen, I guess. You're so cool and fine and—and always so much your own. That's the wonderful *you* in you—that no one can ever really possess—that no one can touch, hardly. It's—it's a kind of beautiful purity, Tracy, that's the only word for it. [*She is now really frightened.*]

TRACY. George—

GEORGE. Oh, it's grand, Tracy—it's just grand! Everyone feels it about you. It's what I first worshiped you for, Tracy, from afar.

TRACY. George, listen—

GEORGE. First, now, and always! [*He leans toward her.*] Only from a little nearer, now—eh, darling?

TRACY. I don't want to be worshiped! I want to be loved!

GEORGE. You're that, too. You're that, all right.

TRACY. I mean really loved.

GEORGE. But that goes without saying, Tracy.

## Twentieth Century Blues

TRACY. And now it's you—who doesn't see what I mean. [EDWARD, carrying a tray with cocktail things and a bottle of champagne enters from the Sitting Room, followed by ELSIE. ELSIE picks up the orange-juice tray from the table.] You can just leave them, Edward. [EDWARD places the tray. ELSIE looks down at DEXTER's present.]

ELSIE. Shall I put this picture with the other presents, Miss Tracy?

TRACY. No—just leave it there, please.

ELSIE. Yes, Miss. [They go out, into the Sitting Room.]

GEORGE [to TRACY]. Don't let Miss Imbrie get hold of it.

TRACY. I should say not. [She rewraps the picture.]

GEORGE. I hope they'll soft pedal the first-marriage angle.

TRACY. I wish they'd pedal themselves right out of here.

GEORGE [after a moment]. They've got a job to do. And it's an honor, you know, Tracy.

TRACY. What is?

GEORGE. Why—to be done by *Destiny*. [TRACY frowns at him.]

TRACY. Are you joking?

GEORGE. Joking—?

TRACY. But you can't seriously mean that you think—!

GEORGE. I think *Destiny* fills a very definite place, Tracy. [TRACY stares at him uncomprehendingly. MARGARET comes in from the Library, followed by SETH. Both are in evening clothes.]

MARGARET. George, you aren't dressed!—And Tracy, you're guests of honor—you mustn't be late. [GEORGE moves swiftly to the steps.]

GEORGE. Right on my way, Ma'am! [He stops and turns to TRACY.] Wait for me, Tracy! I make the Gatehouse in nothing

flat, now! [He is away, down the path, practically at a run.]

SETH. Does he by any chance ever walk anywhere?

TRACY. When he likes, I expect.

SETH. I have a feeling he's going to take the ring tomorrow and go through center with it. [MARGARET laughs and seats herself.]

MARGARET. Seth, you idiot.

TRACY. That's very amusing, I'm sure.

SETH. Oh, don't take things to heart so, Tracy. You'll wear yourself out. [LIZ hurries in from the Garden.]

LIZ. I won't be a minute!

MARGARET. There's no hurry, Miss Imbrie. [LIZ smiles, and goes out, into the Sitting Room. SETH is preparing cocktails.]

SETH. What bothers me at the moment, is the spectacle we're all making of ourselves for the benefit of the young man and woman from *Destiny*.

TRACY. Whose fault is it?

SETH. That's beside the point.

MARGARET. Never in my life have I felt so self-conscious. It's all simply dreadful.

SETH. It's worse: it's stupid and childish and completely undignified.

TRACY. So are other things.

SETH. They can publish what they like about me, but—

TRACY.—My idea is, they'll publish nothing about any of us.

SETH. How do you propose to stop them?

TRACY. I don't quite know yet.

SETH. Well, at present the least we can do is to inform Connor and the camera-lady that we are all quite aware of their purpose here. I insist on that.

TRACY. All right! I'll tell them myself.

SETH. I think it will come better from me, don't you—as, at least, titular head

## *The Philadelphia Story*

of the family? [*He gives MARGARET a cock-tail. A moment, then TRACY speaks deliberately harshly.*]

TRACY. Of course—inasmuch as you let us in for it in the first place.

SETH. Do keep that note out of your voice, Tracy. It's most unattractive.

TRACY. Oh? How does Miss Mara talk? Or does she purr?

MARGARET. Tracy!

SETH. It's all right, Margaret.

TRACY. Sweet and low, I suppose. Dulcet. Very ladylike.—You've got a fine right, you have—after the way you've treated Mother—after the way you've treated us all—a magnificent right you've got to come back here in your best county manner and strike attitudes and make stands and criticize my fiancé and give orders and mess things up generally, just as if you'd done—

MARGARET. Stop it instantly, Tracy! [*TRACY rises abruptly.*]

TRACY. I can't help it. It's sickening.—As if he'd done nothing at all!

MARGARET. It is no concern of yours. If it concerns anyone, it concerns—well, actually, I don't know whom it concerns, except your father.

SETH. That's very wise of you, Margaret. What most wives won't seem to realize, is that their husband's philandering—particularly the middle-aged kind—has nothing whatever to do with them.

TRACY. Oh? Then what has it to do with? [*SETH reseats himself.*]

SETH. A reluctance to grow old, I think. I suppose the best mainstay a man can have as he gets along in years is a daughter—the right kind of daughter.

TRACY. That's interesting, to say the least.

SETH.—One who loves him blindly—as

no good wife ever should, of course.—One for whom he can do no wrong—

TRACY. How sweet.

SETH. I'm talking seriously about something I've thought out thoroughly. I've had to. I think a devoted young daughter gives a man the illusion that youth is still his.

TRACY. Very important, I suppose.

SETH. Very—and without her, he's inclined to go in search of it again, because it's as precious to him as it is to any woman.—But with a girl of his own full of warmth for him, full of foolish, unquestioning, uncritical affection—

TRACY.—None of which I've got.

SETH. None. You have a good mind, a pretty face and a disciplined body that does what you tell it. You have more wealth than any of us, thanks to one grandfather's name and another's red hair, and a shameless play for both of them since about age three. In fact—

TRACY. I never! I loved them!

SETH.—In fact, you have everything it takes to make a lovely woman except the one essential—an understanding heart. Without it, you might just as well be made of bronze.

TRACY [*after a moment*]. That's an awful thing to say to anyone.

SETH. Indeed it is.

TRACY. So I'm to blame for Tina Mara, am I?

SETH. If any blame attaches, to some extent I expect you are.

TRACY. You coward.

SETH. No.—But better to be one than a prig—and a perennial spinster, however many marriages.

MARGARET. Seth! That's too much.

SETH. I'm afraid it's not enough [*TRACY is staring at him.*]

TRACY. Wha-what did you say I was?

## Twentieth Century Blues

SETH. Do you want me to repeat it?

MARGARET. Seth—now I understand a great deal that I didn't. [*He goes to her.*]

SETH. It's all past now, Margaret. It has been for some time. Forgive me. You won't have to again. *I understand a lot more than I did, as well.* [MARGARET touches his hand understandingly. Still TRACY stares.]

TRACY. "A prig and a—?" You mean—you mean you think *I think I'm* some kind of a virgin goddess or something?

SETH. If your ego wishes to call it that, yes.—Also, you've been talking like a jealous woman.

TRACY. A—? [*She turns away, her face a study.*] What's the matter with everyone all at once, anyhow? [UNCLE WILLIE comes in from the Garden.]

UNCLE WILLIE. Miss Imbrie preferred dressing, to my company. [*To SETH.*] What do you make of that, Uncle Willie?

SETH. We're going to drop all this. From now on you're yourself again—and so am I. I shall tell Connor and Miss Imbrie we know what their tender mission is, and at the first opportunity. [SANDY and DINAH, in evening clothes, come in from the house.]

UNCLE WILLIE. It's a pity. It was jolly good fun. Let's have a drink—

SANDY. Damme, let's do that. [*He pours cocktails.*]

DINAH. We're all so completely commonplace. *I don't see how we interest anyone.* [MARGARET frowns over DINAH's costume.]

MARGARET. I think that dress hikes up a little behind. [*DINAH sighs.*]

DINAH. No—it's me that does. [TRACY speaks briefly, out of her preoccupation.]

TRACY. You look adorable, Dinah.

DINAH. Oh, thanks, Tracy! Thanks ever so much!

SANDY. A wedding without ushers and bridesmaids. Peace! It's wonderful—

DINAH. *I'm* the bridesmaid!—So can I have a cocktail at last? Can I?

MARGARET. Certainly not.

DINAH. It's a dirty gyp. [*She throws herself down in a chair.* SANDY offers TRACY a cocktail.]

SANDY. Tracy? [*She shakes her head.*] Champagne, instead?

TRACY. No, thanks.

SANDY. Excuse, please. I forgot, you never.

UNCLE WILLIE. Never? The girl's demented.

TRACY.—But prigs don't.

UNCLE WILLIE. What's that?

TRACY. Nor spinsters.

SANDY. We don't get you.

TRACY. Nor goddesses, virgin or otherwise.

SANDY [*to* UNCLE WILLIE].—Not completely: just a borderline case. [MIKE and LIZ, dressed for dinner, enter from the house. MIKE wears a soft shirt. SANDY greets them.] Hello! You were quick. [TRACY is now standing away from them, leaning against a column of the Porch, noticing nothing.]

UNCLE WILLIE. Miss Imbrie, you are a dream of loveliness. A cocktail or champagne?

LIZ. Thanks, champagne. I've never had enough.

SANDY. You will tonight. [UNCLE WILLIE gives LIZ and MIKE a glass.]

MIKE. Champagne flew. [*He clears his throat, straightens his tie and begins, to* UNCLE WILLIE.] Mr. Lord—er—that is to say— [SETH speaks simultaneously.]

SETH. Mr. Connor—oh—excuse me.

MIKE [*again to* UNCLE WILLIE]. Mr. Lord, Miss Imbrie and I have something on our minds—

## The Philadelphia Story

UNCLE WILLIE. That's splendid; just the place for it. What?

MIKE. Well—er—it's sort of hard to explain—it's—er—about the reason we're here and so forth.

SETH. I think perhaps there's something I ought to explain too—

MIKE.—But did you ever hear of a man named Sidney Kidd? [THOMAS enters with a tray and note.]

SETH.—And did you ever hear of a man named Seth—er—? What is it, Thomas?

THOMAS. They've just phoned a telegram, Mr. Lord—

UNCLE WILLIE. Give it here.

THOMAS [turns to him]. It's for Mrs. Lord, Mr. Tracy. [LIZ and MIKE exchange glances.]

UNCLE WILLIE. Then why didn't you say so?

THOMAS.—Mrs. Lord and Miss Lord, that is. [MARGARET, with a half-smile, glances at SANDY.]

MARGARET. Read it, Thomas. I haven't my glasses.

SANDY. Hey! Wait a minute!

MARGARET. Read it, Thomas.

THOMAS. "Most frightfully sorry will not be able to get down for the wedding as am confined to my bed with everything wrong. Baby better. It was only gas. Love, Father." Is there any answer, Madam?

MARGARET. No, Thomas—none in this world. [He goes out.]

LIZ [to UNCLE WILLIE]. He got you a little mixed up, didn't he?

UNCLE WILLIE. A common mistake.

SETH. Now do you understand, Mr. Connor?

MIKE. I think we do.

LIZ. It's wonderful! Lord only knows where we go from here.

SANDY. To Aunt Geneva's!—Come on, everybody.

DINAH. My first party, and about time. [UNCLE WILLIE moves to LIZ, speaks invitingly.]

UNCLE WILLIE. Who'll come in my little car with me? [MARGARET moves between them, separating them.]

MARGARET. Seth and Dinah and I.—Sandy, will you bring Miss Imbrie and Mr. Connor?

SANDY. Like a shot.

DINAH. The evening is pregnant with possibilities. [MARGARET takes her gently by the shoulders and ushers her out the Library door.]

MARGARET. "Full of" is better, dear. [UNCLE WILLIE passes behind LIZ, on his way out. She exclaims suddenly.]

LIZ. Ouch! [SETH moves to her solicitously.]

SETH. What was it?

LIZ. N-nothing. [SETH goes out. She turns to SANDY.] You know, I felt exactly as if I'd been pinched.

SANDY. Don't think you weren't! [He and LIZ go out. MIKE turns to follow them, then stops as he sees TRACY still standing motionless against the column.]

MIKE. Aren't you coming?

TRACY. I'll follow along with George.

MIKE [after a moment]. What's the matter with you, Tracy?

TRACY. You tell me, will you? [He looks at her intently.]

MIKE. Damn if I know. I'd like to. [She smiles uncertainly.]

TRACY. Well, if you ever happen to find out—

MIKE.—I'll tell you. Sure. [After another moment, she speaks again.]

TRACY.—And remember, Mike—"With the Rich and Mighty—"

MIKE. "—Always a Little Patience"—Yes, Highness, I will.

TRACY. Do that. Please do. [He looks

## Twentieth Century Blues

as her for an instant longer, then turns abruptly and goes out. She is alone. She brushes her hair back from her brow. She sees the champagne upon the table before her. She takes up a glass, lifts it to her lips, drinks it deliberately, then thoughtfully reaches for another.]

CURTAIN

### SCENE 2

[The Porch. About half-past five on Saturday morning. It is going to be a clear day, and throughout the scene the light increases. MAC, the night watchman, about 30, crosses the path from Left to Right smoking a pipe and swinging a lighted lantern. He goes out, Right. SANDY enters from the house. He is carrying a tray with two bottles of champagne, one already opened, a pitcher of milk and glasses. He is followed by TRACY. Both are in evening dress.]

SANDY. The question is, can we get away with it?

TRACY. You've got to get away with it! You must, Sandy!

SANDY. It's your idea, not mine.

TRACY. What difference does that make? [She pours herself a glass of champagne.]

SANDY. You get the ideas and I do all the work.

TRACY. Sandy!

SANDY. Okay.

TRACY. What you don't already know about the great Sidney Kidd, you can certainly fill in from Mike's ravings to-night.

SANDY. I used to have that *Dime* lingo down pretty pat.

TRACY. It's a chance to write a beauty: you know it is.

SANDY. Then I swap it with Kidd for Connor's piece on us—and where am I?

TRACY. You'll have the satisfaction of knowing you saved the lot of us single-handed.

SANDY. And if he won't swap?

TRACY. I'm not worried about that.

SANDY. I suppose there's a fair chance the *Post* would go for it.

TRACY. Of course! You can't possibly lose. Quick—they'll be here! How long will it take you?

SANDY. Three thousand words—all night—what there's left of it. [He looks at his watch.] Holy cats! You get to bed.

TRACY. Have you got a typewriter?

SANDY. My old Corona is upstairs, I think.

TRACY. Make it smoke.

SANDY. You bet.

TRACY. Suds. I can't stand it. You won't fall asleep?

SANDY. I've drunk nothing but black coffee since Connor began his lecture.

TRACY. "Sidney Kidd—his habits—his habitat—and how to hunt him."

SANDY. Poor Connor! It must have been bottled up in him for years.

TRACY. Waiter, another bottle.

SANDY. No. I've got enough for three articles now: profile, full-face—

TRACY.—Also rear elevation.—Mike and Liz—they mustn't suspect, Sandy.

SANDY. Oh, no—oh, my, no!

TRACY. They have simply stepped in their own chewing gum.—I suppose Kidd has one of those private numbers the rich and the mighty hide behind in New York.

SANDY. I'll dig it out of Liz and give him a buzz.

TRACY. What will you say?

SANDY. I'll be brief, bluff, belligerent. [TRACY laughs and pours herself another glass of champagne.] Here—lay off that!

## The Philadelphia Story

TRACY. Why?

SANDY. You are already in wine, sister.

TRACY. Me? You lie. It never affects me, not in the slightest.

SANDY. That's because you never take it.

TRACY. Even if I did, it wouldn't.

SANDY. Don't say that: it's unlucky. [*She drains the glass. SANDY shakes his head over her.*] I have seen people fly in the face of Pommery before.

TRACY. I've just got a good head, I guess.

SANDY. Don't say it, don't say it! [TRACY seats herself upon the steps.]

TRACY. Sandy, you fool.

SANDY. George will spank.

TRACY. I could spank George for the way he behaved. [SANDY seats himself beside her.]

SANDY. He had a right to be sore. You and Mike disappeared for two hours, at least.

TRACY. You were along.

SANDY. All the same, tongues were wagging like tails. George said—

TRACY. George wanted to leave sharp at twelve—how could we?

SANDY. They need a lot of sleep, those big fellows.

TRACY. They must.—Then at one, with Father and Mother and Dinah.—Then at two, then at three—every hour on the hour. We fought like wolves in the car coming home.

SANDY. I hope you explained.

TRACY. Certainly not. He should have known. He was extremely rude. You'd have thought I had been out with Dexter, or something.—[*She thinks for a moment.*] I wonder where Dext was? I half expected him to—I don't like the look behind Dexter's eyes, Sandy. It makes me sad.

SANDY. Don't be sad, Tracy. [*He puts*

*an arm about her and for an instant she rests her head against his shoulder.*]

TRACY. Oh, Sandy, if you knew how I envy you and Sue that darling fat little creature you've just produced—

SANDY. You'll probably have four or five of your own any day now.

TRACY. Six! Oh, I hope—I do hope!—I hope I'm good for something besides knocking out golf balls and putting horses over fences.

SANDY. You're good for my money any day.

TRACY. Thanks! [*She gets up from the step and moves again to the table.*] Was I really mean to George I wonder? I don't want to be.

SANDY. You're in an odd mood, little fellow. What's amiss—what's afoot?

TRACY. I guess it's just that—a lot of things I always thought were terribly important, I find now are—and the other way around—and—oh, what the hell. [*She refills her glass, looks at it and puts it down upon the table.*]

SANDY. I don't think I'd spend much more time with Connor tonight, if I were you.

TRACY. Why not?

SANDY. Writers with wine sauce intoxicate little girls. [*She laughs uncertainly.*]

TRACY. They sort of do, don't they?—He fascinates me. He's so violent, Sandy.

SANDY. He's fallen, Tray. I could hear him bump.

TRACY. Mind your own beeswax, old Nosey Parker.

SANDY. Get thee to bed. [*She reaches for her glass—he stops her hand.*]

TRACY. No!

SANDY.—Before you have to be carried.

TRACY. No! No! No! [*She throws up her arms, her head back.*] I feel too delicious!—Sandy, I feel just elegant. [*Then*



## Twentieth Century Blues

*cocks her head, listening.*] Is that my bedroom telephone?

SANDY. Now you're hearing things.

TRACY. It couldn't be anyone but George. I *was* sort of swinish to him. Perhaps I'd better— [*She starts toward the Sitting Room.*] As for you—get to work, you dog. Stop leaning on your shovel. [*She stops, as MIKE comes out upon the Porch from the Library. He is in fine fettle, coatless, his soft shirt open at the neck. He goes directly to the table.*]

MIKE. Listen! Now I'm really under way. Miss not an inflection.

TRACY. Is it Connor the poet, or Connor the conspirator?

MIKE. Both! [*He pours himself a glass of wine and begins to declaim.*] "No lightweight is balding, beetlebrowed Sidney Kidd, no mean displacement, his: for windy bias, bicarbonate." [*He drinks the wine, looks at the glass.*] This is funny stuff. I'm used to whisky. Whisky is a clap on the back. Champagne, entwining arms.

TRACY. That's pretty. Is it poetry?

MIKE. Dime will tell.

SANDY. "None before him but Writer Wolfgang Goethe has known all about all. Gigantic was Goethe's output, bigger already is Kidd's. Sample from his own pen: 'Pittsburgh is a gentle city.'"

TRACY. Sidney is a gentle man. [*MIKE points a finger at SANDY.*]

MIKE. Potent, able, beady-eyed scion of great wealth in Quakertown, why don't you do a piece on our great and good friend?

SANDY. On Kidd?

MIKE. On none other.

SANDY. Nimble scrivener, it's an idea.

TRACY. Brilliant. I wish I'd thought of it. [*MIKE turns and points a finger at her.*]

MIKE. Baby Giant Tycooness.

TRACY. But would it not be a low, dirty deed?

MIKE. He'd print a scandal about his best friend: he's said he would.

SANDY. Who is his best friend?

MIKE. I guess Santa Claus. [*He passes his hand vaguely over his face.*] What is this mist before my eyes? [*TRACY rises suddenly and goes to the table.*]

TRACY. I tell you what! Let's all have a quick swim to brighten us up. Go get Liz, Sandy. [*She strips off her bracelets and rings and leaves them on table.*]

SANDY. Not me: It's too cold this early.

TRACY. It's the best hour of the day! Dexter and I always swam after parties.

MIKE. I haven't got any bathing suit.

TRACY. But we won't need any! It's just ourselves. [*He looks at her uncertainly for an instant, then quickly fills two glasses, moves one gingerly toward her, and raises the other.*]

MIKE. Let's dip into this instead.

TRACY. [*after a brief pause, to SANDY.*] No takers.—Get Liz anyway, Sandy.

SANDY. If she's not in bed. [*He goes out into the Sitting Room.*].—Or even if she is.

TRACY [*to MIKE, after a moment*]. That was an odd thing you just did—

MIKE. Me?

TRACY [*turning away*]. You. For a moment you made me—self-conscious.

MIKE. How? About what?

TRACY. Never mind. [*She raises her glass.*] Hello, you. [*He raises his.*]

MIKE. Hello.

TRACY. You look fine.

MIKE. I feel fine.

TRACY. Quite a fellah.

MIKE. They say. [*They drink.*]

TRACY. Did you enjoy the party?

MIKE. Sure. The prettiest sight in this fine pretty world is the Privileged Class enjoying its privileges.

## *The Philadelphia Story*

TRACY.—Also somewhat of a snob.

MIKE. How do you mean?

TRACY. I'm wondering.

MIKE. Consider, Gentle Reader: they toil not, neither do they spin.

TRACY. Oh, yes, they do! They spin in circles. [*She spins once and seats herself upon the step at Left. MIKE goes to her.*]

MIKE. Nicely put. "Awash with champagne was Mrs. Willie Q. Tracy (born Geneva Biddle)'s stately pleasure dome on a hilltop in smart Radnor, Pa., on a Saturday night late in June, the eve of her great-niece's—" [*He sits beside her.*] Tracy, you can't marry that guy.

TRACY. George?—I'm going to. Why not?

MIKE. I don't know. I'd have thought I'd be for it. But somehow you just don't seem to match up.

TRACY. Then the fault's with me.

MIKE. Maybe so: all the same, you can't do it. [*TRACY rises and moves a little way along the path.*]

TRACY. No? Come around about noon tomorrow—I mean today. [*After a moment he rises and faces her.*]

MIKE. Tracy—

TRACY. Yes, Mr. Connor?

MIKE. How do you mean, I'm "a snob"?

TRACY. You're the worst kind there is: an intellectual snob. You've made up your mind awfully young, it seems to me. [*MIKE goes to her.*]

MIKE. Thirty's about time to make up your mind.—And I'm nothing of the sort, not Mr. Connor.

TRACY. The time to make up your mind about people is never. Yes, you are—and a complete one.

MIKE. You're quite a girl.

TRACY. You think?

MIKE. I know.

TRACY. Thank you, Professor. I don't think I'm exceptional.

MIKE. You are, though.

TRACY. I know any number like me. You ought to get around more.

MIKE. In the Upper Clahss? No, thanks.

TRACY. You're just a mass of prejudices, aren't you? You're so much thought and so little feeling, Professor. [*She moves Right, further away from him.*]

MIKE. Oh, I am, am I? [*She wheels about on him.*]

TRACY. Yes, you am, are you!—Your damned intolerance furiates me. I mean *infuriates* me! I should think, of all people, a writer would need tolerance. The fact is, you'll never—you can't be a first-rate writer or a first-rate human being until you learn to have some small regard for— [*Suddenly she stops. Her eyes widen, remembering. She turns from him.*] Aren't the geraniums pretty, Professor? Is it not a handsome day that begins? [*MIKE mounts the Porch, looks down upon her.*]

MIKE. Lay off that "Professor."

TRACY. Yes, Professor. [*She mounts the Porch, faces him.*]

MIKE. You've got all the arrogance of your class all right, haven't you?

TRACY. Holy suds, what have "classes" to do with it!

MIKE. Quite a lot.

TRACY. Why? What do they matter—except for the people in them? George comes from the so-called "lower" class, Dexter comes from the upper. Well?

MIKE. Well?

TRACY.—Though there's a great deal to be said for Dexter—and don't you forget it!

MIKE. I'll try not to. [*TRACY moves to the table.*]

TRACY. Mac, the night watchman, is a prince among men and Joey, the stable

## Twentieth Century Blues

boy, is a rat. Uncle Hugh is a saint. Uncle Willie's a pincher. [*She fills her glass again.*]

MIKE. So what?

TRACY. There aren't any rules about human beings, that's all!—You're teaching me things, Professor: this is new to me. Thanks, I am beholden to you. [*She raises her glass to him.*]

MIKE. Not at all.

TRACY. "Upper" and "lower" my eye! I'll take the lower, thanks. [*She brings the glass to her lips.*]

MIKE.—If you can't get a drawing-room. [*She puts the glass down, untasted, and turns on him.*]

TRACY. What do you mean by that?

MIKE. My mistake.

TRACY. Decidedly.

MIKE. Okay.

TRACY. You're insulting.

MIKE. I'm sorry.

TRACY. Oh, don't apologize!

MIKE. Who the hell's apologizing?

TRACY. I never knew such a man.

MIKE. You wouldn't be likely to, dear—not from where you sit.

TRACY. Talk about arrogance!

MIKE [*after a moment*]. Tracy—

TRACY. What do you want?

MIKE. You're wonderful. [*She laughs.*]

TRACY. Professor—may I go out?

MIKE. Class is dismissed. [*She moves Left.*] Miss Lord will please wait. [*She stops, turns and meets his gaze steadily.*]

TRACY. Miss Lord is privileged. [*MIKE speaks in a lower voice.*]

MIKE. There's magnificence in you, Tracy. I'm telling you.

TRACY. I'm—! [*A moment.*] Now I'm getting self-conscious again. I—it's funny— [*Another moment. Then she moves toward him, impulsively.*] Mike, let's— [*She stops herself.*]

MIKE. What?

TRACY. I—I don't know—go up, I guess. It's late.

MIKE.—A magnificence that comes out of your eyes, that's in your voice, in the way you stand there, in the way you walk. You're lit from within, bright, bright, bright. There are fires banked down in you, hearth-fires and holocausts— [*She moves another step toward him, stands before him.*]

TRACY. You—I don't seem to you—made of bronze, then—

MIKE. You're made of flesh and blood—that's the blank, unholy surprise of it. You're the golden girl, Tracy, full of love and warmth and delight— What the hell's this? You've got tears in your eyes.

TRACY. Shut up, shut up!—Oh, Mike—keep talking—keep talking! *Talk*, will you?

MIKE. I've stopped. [*For a long moment they look at each other. Then TRACY speaks, deliberately, harshly.*]

TRACY. Why? Has your mind taken hold again, dear Professor?

MIKE. You think so? [*She moves Right, away from him.*]

TRACY. Yes, Professor.

MIKE. A good thing, don't you agree? [*She leans against the column of the Porch, facing him.*]

TRACY. No, Professor.

MIKE. Drop that Professor—you hear me?

TRACY. Yes, Professor. [*He moves to her slowly, stands almost against her.*]

MIKE. That's really all I am to you, is it?

TRACY. Of course, Professor.

MIKE. Are you sure? [*She looks up at him.*]

TRACY. Why, why yes—yes, of course, Profess— [*His kiss stops the word. The*

## The Philadelphia Story

*kiss is taken and returned. After it she exclaims softly.] Golly. [She gazes at him wondering, then raises her face to receive another. Then she stands in his arms, her cheek against his breast, amazement in her eyes.] Golly Moses.*

MIKE. Tracy dear—

TRACY. Mr. Connor—Mr. Connor—

MIKE. Let me tell you something—

TRACY. No, don't— All of a sudden I've got the shakes.

MIKE. I have, too.

TRACY. What is it?

MIKE. It must be something like love.

TRACY. No, no! It mustn't be. It can't—

MIKE. Why? Would it be inconvenient?

TRACY. Terribly. Anyway, it isn't. I know it's not. Oh, Mike, I'm a bad girl—

MIKE. Not you.

TRACY. We're out of our minds.

MIKE.—Right into our hearts.

TRACY. That ought to have music.

MIKE. It has, hasn't it?—Tracy, you lovely— [*She hears something, looks quickly toward the door, whispers.*]

TRACY. They're coming.

MIKE. The hell. [*She holds a hand out to him.*]

TRACY. It's—it's not far to the pool. It's only over the lawn, in the birch-grove—it'll be lovely now.

MIKE. Come on—

TRACY. Oh, it's as—it's as if my insteps—were melting away.—What is it? Have I—have I got feet of clay, or something?

MIKE.—Quick! Here they are— [*He takes her hand and hurries her down the steps.*]

TRACY. I—I feel so small all at once.

MIKE. You're immense—you're tremendous.

TRACY. Not me—oh, not me! Put me in your pocket, Mike— [*They are gone. A moment, then SANDY comes quickly in*

*from the house, a sheaf of photographs in his hand. He is followed by LIZ, in pajamas and wrapper.*]

LIZ. You give those back!

SANDY. Look, Tracy— [*He sees that the Porch is empty.*]

LIZ. May I have them, please?

SANDY. Did Kidd *know* you took these shots of him?

LIZ. Some of them.

SANDY. Sit down. Have a drink.

LIZ. I should say not. A drink would be redundant, tautological, and a mistake. [*Wearily she drops into a chair and eyes the pitcher on the table.*] Is that milk?

SANDY. That is milk.

LIZ. Gimme. Milk, I will accept. [*He pours and gives her a glass.*] I met this cow this afternoon. Nice Bossy.

SANDY. Let me keep just these three shots.

LIZ. What for?

SANDY. A low purpose.

LIZ. Sufficiently low?

SANDY. Nefarious.

LIZ. You won't reproduce them?

SANDY. Nope.

LIZ. Nor cause them to be reproduced?

SANDY. Honest.

LIZ.—In any way, shape, or manner, without permission?

SANDY. So help me, Sidney Kidd.

LIZ. Amen.

SANDY. What's his private number?

LIZ. You mean his private number or his sacred private number?

SANDY. The one by the bed and the bathtub.

LIZ. Regent 4-1416— [*She settles lower in the chair. SANDY goes to the telephone just inside the near Sitting-Room door.*] I won't tell you. [*She listens a moment, as he dials. Then.*] Is Mr. Kittredge pure

## Twentieth Century Blues

gold, Lord? [*SANDY comes into the doorway, the telephone in hand.*]

SANDY. We must never doubt that, Missy. [*He stands behind her chair, looking down upon her.*]

LIZ [*sleepily*]. *Lèse majesté*—excuse it, please.

SANDY [*to the telephone*]. Regent 4-1416 New York.—Wayne 22-23. [*To Liz.*—And Mr. Connor—what of him?

LIZ. Percentage of base metal. Alloy.

SANDY. So.

LIZ.—Which imparts a certain shape and firmness.

SANDY [*to the telephone*]. Hello?—Mr. Kidd? This is Alexander Lord. [*Liz listens intently.*]

LIZ. I know nothing about this.

SANDY. No, I'm in Philadelphia.—Yes, I know it is. It's early here, too. Look, Mr. Kidd, I think you'd better get over here as fast as you can. What?—I'm sorry to have to tell you, sir, but Connor has had an accident—yes, pretty bad—he had a pretty bad fall.—No, it's his heart we're worried about now.—Yes, I'm afraid so: He keeps talking about you, calling you names—I mean calling your name.—How's that?—No, the eleven o'clock's time enough. We don't expect him to regain consciousness much before then.

LIZ. His only hope is to get fired—I know it is.

SANDY. Sorry, Miss Imbrie's sleeping. Shock.—The newspapers? No, they don't know a thing about it. I understand. What? I said I understood, didn't I?—Twelve-twenty North Philadelphia—I'll have you met. [*He disappears briefly into the Sitting Room and returns without the telephone.*] He wants no publicity. [*Liz has suppressed her broadening grin. She stirs lazily in her chair and inquires.*]

LIZ. Who was that?

SANDY. God. [*She looks toward the Garden path.*]

LIZ. Do I hear someone?

SANDY. It's Mac, the night watchman.—Liz—you're in love with Connor, aren't you?

LIZ. People ask the oddest questions.

SANDY. Why don't you marry him?

LIZ. I can't hear you.

SANDY. I say, why don't you—? [*DEXTER comes along the path and stops at the steps. He wears flannels and an old jacket.*] Hello, here's an early one!

DEXTER. Hello. I saw quite a full day ahead, and got myself up. [*He seats himself on the steps.*—A good party?

SANDY. Fine.

DEXTER. Good. [*He lights a cigarette. Liz rises from her chair.*]

LIZ.—And sufficient. Hell or high water, I'm going to bed. [*She moves toward the far Sitting-Room door.*]

SANDY [*following her*]. Why don't you, Liz—you know—what I asked?

LIZ. He's still got a lot to learn, and I don't want to get in his way yet a while. Okay?

SANDY. Okay.—Risky, though. Suppose another girl came along in the meantime?

LIZ. Oh, I'd just scratch her eyes out, I guess.—That is, unless she was going to marry someone else the next day.

SANDY. You're a good number, Liz.

LIZ. No, I just photograph well. [*She goes out.*]

DEXTER. Complications? [*SANDY re-examines the photographs.*]

SANDY. There might be.

DEXTER. Where are they?

SANDY. Who?

DEXTER. The complications.

SANDY. They went up—at least I hope and pray that they did.

## *The Philadelphia Story*

DEXTER. Well, well. [*SANDY waves the photographs at him and moves toward the Library door.*]

SANDY. Make yourself comfortable, Dext. I've got a little blackmailing to do. [*SANDY goes out. DEXTER smokes quietly for a moment, then rises and stamps out his cigarette as he hears someone coming along the path. GEORGE enters, still in evening clothes. He stops in surprise at the sight of DEXTER.*]

GEORGE. What are you doing here?

DEXTER. Oh, I'm a friend of the family's—just dropped in for a chat.

GEORGE. Don't try to be funny. I asked you a question.

DEXTER. I might ask you the same one.

GEORGE. I telephoned Tracy and her phone didn't answer.

DEXTER. I didn't telephone. I just came right over.

GEORGE. I was worried, so I—

DEXTER. Yes, I was worried, too.

GEORGE. About what?

DEXTER. What do you think of this Connor—or do you?

GEORGE. What about him?

DEXTER. I just wondered. [*He moves away from him, toward the table.*]

GEORGE. Listen: If you're trying to insinuate some—

DEXTER. My dear fellow, I wouldn't dream of it! I was only— [*He stops suddenly as TRACY's rings and bracelets upon the table catch his eye. GEORGE looks down the Garden path.*]

GEORGE. Who's that I hear? [*DEXTER glances quickly down the path in the direction of the swimming pool, then pockets the rings and bracelets. He turns to GEORGE.*]

DEXTER. Look, Kittredge: I advise you to go to bed.

GEORGE. Oh, you do, do you?

DEXTER. Yes. I strongly urge you to do so at once.

GEORGE. I'm staying right here. [*DEXTER looks at him.*]

DEXTER. You're making a mistake. Somehow I don't think you'll understand.

GEORGE. You'd better leave that to—I hear someone walking—

DEXTER. Yes?—Must be Mac. [*He calls out down the path, making every word clear.*] It's all right, Mac—it's only us! [*He turns to GEORGE—comes down to him.*] Come on—I'll walk along with you.

GEORGE. I'm staying right here—so are you.

DEXTER. All right, then: take the works, and may God be with you. [*He retires into a corner of the Porch. Heavy steps on the gravel path draw nearer. Finally, MIKE appears, carrying TRACY in his arms. Both are in bathrobes and slippers and there is a jumble of clothes, his and hers, slung over MIKE's shoulder. He stops with her for a moment at the top of the steps. She stirs in his arms, speaks lowly, as if from a long way away.*]

TRACY. Take me upstairs, Mike—

MIKE. Yes, dear. Here we go. [*GEORGE looms up.*]

GEORGE. What the—! [*DEXTER comes swiftly in between him and MIKE.*]

DEXTER. Easy, old boy! [*To MIKE.*] She's not hurt?

MIKE. No. She's just— [*TRACY murmurs dreamily.*]

TRACY. Not wounded, sire—but dead.

GEORGE. She—she hasn't any clothes on!

TRACY [*into MIKE's shoulder*]. Not a stitch—it's delicious. [*MIKE speaks lowly.*]

MIKE. It seems the minute she hit the water, the wine— [*DEXTER glances at GEORGE, who can only stare.*]

## Twentieth Century Blues

DEXTER. A likely story, Connor.

MIKE. What did you say?

DEXTER. I said, a likely story!

MIKE. Listen: if—!

DEXTER. You'll come down again directly?

MIKE. Yes, if you want.

DEXTER. I want. [*TRACY lifts her head limply and looks at them.*]

TRACY. Hello, Dexter. Hello, George. [*She crooks her head around and looks vaguely up at MIKE.*] Hello, Mike. [*DEXTER goes and opens the screen door for them.*]

DEXTER. The second door on the right at the top of the stairs. Mind you don't wake Dinah. [*MIKE moves toward the door with TRACY.*]

TRACY. My feet are of clay—made of clay—did you know it? [*She drops her head again and tightens her arms around MIKE's neck.*] Goo' nigh'—sleep well, little man. [*MIKE carries her out, past DEXTER.*]

DEXTER [*calling after them*]. Look out for Dinah! [*He comes forward.*] How are the mighty fallen!—But if I know Tracy—and I know her very well—she'll remember very little of this. For the second time in her life, she may draw quite a tidy blank.—Of course she may worry, though—

GEORGE. Good God! [*DEXTER turns on him swiftly.*]

DEXTER. You believe it, then?

GEORGE. Believe what?

DEXTER. The—er—the implications of what you've seen, let's say.

GEORGE. What else is there to believe?

DEXTER. Why, I suppose that's entirely up to you.

GEORGE. I've got eyes, and I've got imagination, haven't I?

DEXTER. I don't know. Have you?

GEORGE. So you pretend not to believe it—

DEXTER. Yes, I pretend not to.

GEORGE. Then you don't know women.

DEXTER. Possibly not.

GEORGE. You're a blind fool!

DEXTER. Oh, quite possibly!

GEORGE.—God! [*DEXTER studies him.*]

DEXTER. You won't be too hard on her, will you?

GEORGE. I'll make up my own mind what I'll be!

DEXTER. But we're all only human, you know.

GEORGE. You—all of you—with your damned sophisticated ideas!

DEXTER. Isn't it hell? [*MIKE comes swiftly through the door and up to DEXTER.*]

MIKE. Well? [*GEORGE advances.*]

GEORGE. Why, you lowdown—!

DEXTER [*quickly*]. The lady is my wife, Mr. Connor. [*His uppercut to MIKE's jaw sends him across the Porch and to the floor.*]

GEORGE. You!—What right have—?

DEXTER.—A husband's, till tomorrow, Kittredge.

GEORGE. I'll make up my mind, all right! [*He turns, and storms out down the Garden path. DEXTER bends over MIKE.*]

DEXTER. Okay, old man? [*MIKE sits up, nursing his chin.*]

MIKE. Listen: if you think—!

DEXTER. I know—I'm sorry. But I thought I'd better hit you before he did. [*MAC, the night watchman, comes along the Garden path from the opposite direction taken by GEORGE. He is putting his lantern out. DEXTER straightens up.*] Hello, Mac. How are you?

MAC. Hello, Dexter! Anything wrong?

## *The Philadelphia Story*

DEXTER. Not a thing, Mac.—Just as quiet as a church.

MAC. Who is it? [MIKE turns his face to him.] Hell!—I thought it might be Kittredge.

DEXTER. We can't have everything, Mac. [MAC laughs, shakes his head, and continues along the path.]

CURTAIN

### ACT III

[*The Sitting Room. Late morning, Saturday. The room is full of bright noonday sun and there are flowers everywhere. UNCLE WILLIE, in a morning coat, fancy waistcoat, and Ascot, stands in the center of the room facing THOMAS.*]

THOMAS. I am trying to think, Mr. Tracy. [*A moment, then UNCLE WILLIE demands impatiently.*]

UNCLE WILLIE. Well? Well?

THOMAS. She wakened late, sir, and had a tray in her room. I believe May and Elsie are just now dressing her.

UNCLE WILLIE. It's not the bride I'm asking about—it's her sister.

THOMAS. I haven't seen Miss Dinah since breakfast, sir. She came down rather early.

UNCLE WILLIE. Is there anything wrong with her?

THOMAS. I did notice that she seemed a trifle silent, took only one egg and neglected to finish her cereal. The hot cakes and bacon, however, went much as usual.

UNCLE WILLIE. She was telephoning me like a mad woman before I was out of my tub. [DINAH, in blue-jeans, tiptoes in from the Porch and up behind him.] I expected at least two bodies, hacked beyond recognition, the house stiff with police, and—[DINAH tugs at his coattail. He starts and turns.] Good God, child—don't do that! I drank champagne last night.

DINAH. Hello, Uncle Willie.

UNCLE WILLIE. Why must I come on

ahead of your Aunt Geneva? Why must I waste not one minute? What's amiss? What's about? Speak up! Don't stand there with your big eyes like a stuffed owl. [DINAH glances significantly at THOMAS.]

THOMAS. Is there anything else, sir? If not—

UNCLE WILLIE. Thanks, Thomas, nothing. [THOMAS goes out. Again DINAH tugs at UNCLE WILLIE's coattail, drawing him to an armchair.]

DINAH. Come over here—and speak very low. Nobody's allowed to come in here this morning but Tracy—and speak terribly low.

UNCLE WILLIE. What the Sam Hill for? What's alack? What's afoot?

DINAH. I had no one to turn to but you, Uncle Willie.

UNCLE WILLIE. People are always turning to me. I wish they'd stop. [She kneels on another chair, leaning over the table to him.]

DINAH. It's desperate. It's about Tracy.

UNCLE WILLIE. Tracy? What's she up to now? Tracy this, and Tracy that. Upstairs and downstairs and in my lady's chamber.

DINAH. How did you know?

UNCLE WILLIE. Know what?

DINAH. It seems to me you know just about everything.

UNCLE WILLIE. I have a fund of information accumulated through the years. I am old, seasoned, and full of instruction.



## Twentieth Century Blues

But there are gaps in my knowledge. Ask me about falconry, say, or ballistics, and you will get nowhere.

DINAH. I meant more about people and—and sin.

UNCLE WILLIE. I know only that they are inseparable. I also know that the one consolation for being old is the realization that, however you live, you will never die young.—Get to the point, child. What do you want of me?

DINAH. Advice.

UNCLE WILLIE. On what subject of subjects?

DINAH [*after a moment*]. Well, lookit: you don't like George, do you?

UNCLE WILLIE. Kittredge? I deplore him.

DINAH. And you'd like it if Tracy didn't go ahead and have married him after all—or would you?

UNCLE WILLIE. Where do you go to school?

DINAH. I don't, yet. I'm going some place next fall.

UNCLE WILLIE. And high time.—Like it? I would cheer. I would raise my voice in song.

DINAH. Well, I think I know a way to stop her from, but I need advice on how.

UNCLE WILLIE. Proceed, child—proceed cautiously.

DINAH. Well, suppose she all of a sudden developed an illikit passion for someone—

UNCLE WILLIE. Can you arrange it?

DINAH. It doesn't need to be. It is already.

UNCLE WILLIE. Ah? Since when?

DINAH. Last night—and well into the morning.

UNCLE WILLIE. You surprise me, Dinah.

DINAH. Imagine what *I* was—and just imagine what *George* would be.

UNCLE WILLIE. And—er—the object of this—er—illikit passion—

DINAH. Let him be nameless.—Only tell me, should I tell George?—It's getting late. [*Unnoticed by them DEXTER has come in from the Porch.*]

UNCLE WILLIE. Maybe he'll want to marry her anyway.

DINAH. But she can't! If she marries anyone, it's got to be Mr. Connor!

UNCLE WILLIE. Connor? Why Connor?

DINAH. She's just got to, that's all! [*DEXTER comes forward.*]

DEXTER. Why, Dinah? What makes you think she should? [*DINAH looks at him, appalled.*]

DINAH. Dexter!

DEXTER. Isn't that a pretty big order to swing at this late date?

DINAH. I—I didn't say anything. What did I say?

DEXTER. Of course, you might talk it over with her.—But maybe you have.

DINAH. Certainly not, I haven't!

UNCLE WILLIE. Apparently the little cherub has seen or heard something.

DEXTER. That's Dexter's own Dinah.

UNCLE WILLIE. I must say *you* show a certain amount of cheek, walking in here on this, of all mornings.

DEXTER. Tracy just did a very sweet thing: she telephoned and asked me what to do for a feeling of fright accompanied by headache.

DINAH. I should think it would be bad luck for a first husband to see the bride before the wedding.

DEXTER. That's what I figured.—Why all this about Connor, Dinah? Did the party give you bad dreams?

DINAH. It wasn't any dream.

DEXTER. I wouldn't be too sure. Once you've gone to bed it's pretty hard to tell, isn't it? [*DINAH ponders this.*]

## The Philadelphia Story

DINAH. Is it?

DEXTER. You bet your hat it is. It's practically impossible.

DINAH. I thought it was Sandy's typewriter woke me up. [*TRACY comes in from the Hall, in the dress in which she is to be married. A leather-strapped wrist watch dangles from her hand. She moves to the sofa.*]

TRACY. Hello! Isn't it a fine day, though! Is everyone fine? That's fine! [*She seats herself uncertainly.*] My, I'm hearty.

DEXTER. How are you otherwise?

TRACY. I don't know what's the matter with me. I must have had too much sun yesterday.

DEXTER. It's awfully easy to get too much. [*She picks up a silver cigarette box and looks at herself in it.*]

TRACY. My eyes don't open properly. [*She blinks up at DEXTER.*] Please go home, Dext.

DEXTER. Not till we get those eyes open. [*He seats himself beside her upon the sofa. She notices UNCLE WILLIE.*]

TRACY. Uncle Willie, good morning.

UNCLE WILLIE. That remains to be seen.

TRACY. Aren't you here early?

UNCLE WILLIE. Weddings get me out like nothing else.

DINAH. It's nearly half-past twelve.

TRACY. It can't be!

DINAH. Maybe it can't, but it is.

TRACY. Where—where's Mother? [*DINAH springs up.*]

DINAH. Do you want her?

TRACY. No, I just wondered. [*DINAH reseats herself.*]

DINAH. She's talking with the orchestra, and Father with the minister, and—

TRACY. Dr. Parsons—already?

DINAH.—And Miss Imbrie's gone with her camera to shoot the horses, and San-

dy's in his room and—and Mr. Connor, he hasn't come down yet.

DEXTER. And it's Saturday.

TRACY. Thanks loads. It's nice to have things accounted for. [*She passes the hand with the wrist watch across her brow, then looks at the watch.*]—Only I wonder what this might be?

DEXTER. It looks terribly like a wrist watch.

TRACY. But whose? I found it in my room. I nearly stepped on it.

DINAH. Getting out of bed?

TRACY. Yes. Why?

DINAH. I just wondered. [*TRACY puts the watch on the table before her.*]

TRACY. There's another mystery, Uncle Willie.

UNCLE WILLIE. Mysteries irritate me.

TRACY. I was robbed at your house last night.

UNCLE WILLIE. You don't say.

TRACY. Yes—my bracelets and my engagement ring are missing everywhere.

UNCLE WILLIE. Probably someone's house guest from New York. [*DEXTER brings them out of his pocket.*]

DEXTER. Here you are. [*She takes them, stares at them, then at him.*]

TRACY.—But you weren't at the party!

DEXTER. Wasn't I?

TRACY. Were you?

DEXTER. Don't tell me you don't remember!

TRACY. I—I do now, sort of—but there were such a lot of people. [*DEXTER rises.*]

DEXTER. You should have taken a quick swim to shake them off. There's nothing like a swim after a late night.

TRACY.—A swim. [*And her eyes grow rounder. DEXTER laughs.*]

DEXTER. There! Now they're open!

DINAH. That was just the beginning—

## Twentieth Century Blues

and it was no dream. [DEXTER glances at her, then moves to UNCLE WILLIE.]

DEXTER. Don't you think, sir, that if you and I went to the pantry at this point—you know: speaking of eye-openers? [UNCLE WILLIE rises and precedes him toward the Porch.]

UNCLE WILLIE. The only sane remark I've heard this morning. I know a formula that is said to pop the pennies off the eyelids of dead Irishmen. [He goes out. DEXTER stops beside DINAH.]

DEXTER. Oh, Dinah—if conversation drags, you might tell Tracy your dream. [He goes out. DINAH turns and gazes reflectively at TRACY.]

TRACY. What did he say?

DINAH. Oh, nothing. [She goes to TRACY and puts an arm around her shoulder.] Tray—I hate you to get married and go away.

TRACY. I'll miss you, darling. I'll miss all of you.

DINAH. We'll miss you, too.—It—it isn't like when you married Dexter, and just moved down the road a ways.

TRACY. I'll come back often. It's only Wilkes-Barre.

DINAH. It gripes me.

TRACY [fondly]. Baby— [There is another silence. DINAH gazes at her intently, then gathers her forces and speaks.]

DINAH. You know, I did have the funniest dream about you last night.

TRACY [without interest]. Did you? What was it?

DINAH. It was terribly interesting, and—and awfully scary, sort of— [TRACY rises from the sofa.]

TRACY. Do you like my dress, Dinah?

DINAH. Yes, ever so much. [TRACY has risen too quickly. She wavers a moment, steadies herself, then moves to the Porch door.]

TRACY. It feels awfully heavy.—You'd better rush and get ready yourself.

DINAH. You know me: I don't take a minute. [MARGARET, dressed for the wedding, comes in from the Parlor, from whence violins are now heard, tuning up.]

MARGARET. Turn around, Tracy. [TRACY turns.] Yes, it looks lovely.

TRACY. What's that—that scratching sound I hear?

MARGARET. The orchestra tuning. Yes—I'm glad we decided against the blue one. [She moves to the Hall door.] Where's your father? You know, I feel completely impersonal about all this. I can't quite grasp it. Get dressed, Dinah. [She goes out into the Hall. TRACY turns and blinks into the sunlight, blazing in from the Porch.]

TRACY. That sun is certainly bright all right, isn't it?

DINAH. It was up awfully early.

TRACY. Was it?

DINAH. Unless I dreamed that, too.—It's supposed to be the longest day of the year or something, isn't it?

TRACY. I wouldn't doubt it for a minute.

DINAH. It was all certainly pretty rooty-tooty.

TRACY. What was?

DINAH. My dream. [TRACY moves back from the Porch door.]

TRACY. Dinah, you'll have to learn sooner or later that no one is interested in anyone else's dreams.

DINAH.—I thought I got up and went over to the window and looked out across the lawn. And guess what I thought I saw coming over out of the woods?

TRACY. I haven't the faintest idea. A skunk?

DINAH. Well, sort of.—It was Mr. Connor.

TRACY. Mr. Connor?

## *The Philadelphia Story*

DINAH. Yes—with his both arms full of something. And guess what it turned out to be?

TRACY. What?

DINAH. You—and some clothes. [TRACY turns slowly and looks at her.] Wasn't it funny? It was sort of like as if you were coming from the pool— [TRACY closes her eyes.]

TRACY. The pool.—I'm going crazy. I'm standing here solidly on my own two hands, going crazy.—And then what?

DINAH. Then I thought I heard something outside in the hall, and I went and opened my door a crack and there he was, still coming along with you, puffing like a steam engine. His wind can't be very good.

TRACY. And then what?—

DINAH. And you were sort of crooning—

TRACY. I never crooned in my life!

DINAH. I guess it just sort of sounded like you were. Then he—guess what?

TRACY. I—couldn't possibly.

DINAH. Then he just sailed right into your room with you and—and that scared me so, that I just flew back to bed—or thought I did—and pulled the covers up over my head and laid there shaking and thinking: if *that's* the way it is, why doesn't she marry him, instead of old George? And then I must have fallen even faster asleep, because the next thing I knew it was eight o'clock, and the typewriter still going.

TRACY. Sandy—the typewriter—

DINAH. So in a minute I got up and went to your door and peeked in, to make sure you were all right—and guess what?

TRACY [agonized]. What?

DINAH. You were. He was gone by then. [TRACY assumes a high indignation.]

TRACY. Gone? Of course he was gone—he was never there!

DINAH. I know, Tracy.

TRACY. Well! I should hope you did! [She seats herself firmly in an armchair.]

DINAH. I'm certainly glad I do, because if I didn't and if in a little while I heard Dr. Parsons saying, "If anyone knows any just cause or reason why these two should not be united in holy matrimony"—I just wouldn't know what to do. [She sighs profoundly.]—And it was all only a dream.

TRACY. Naturally!

DINAH. I know. Dexter said so, straight off.—But isn't it funny, how—

TRACY. Dexter!

DINAH. Yes.—He said— [TRACY rises and seizes her by the arm.]

TRACY. You told Dexter all that?

DINAH. Not a word. Not a single word.—But you know how quick he is.

TRACY. Dinah Lord—you little fiend, how can you stand here and—! [SETH comes in from the Hall, in morning coat and striped trousers.]

SETH. Tracy, the next time you marry, choose a different Man of God, will you? This one wears me out. [He goes to the Parlor doors, opens them, glances in, and closes them again.] Good heavens!—Dinah! Get into your clothes! You look like a tramp.

DINAH. I'm going. [SETH is about to go out again into the Hall, when TRACY's voice stops him.]

TRACY. Father. [He turns to her.]

SETH. Yes, Tracy?

TRACY. I'm glad you came back. I'm glad you're here. [He comes to her.]

SETH. Thank you, child.

TRACY. I'm sorry—I'm truly sorry I'm a disappointment to you.

SETH. I never said that, daughter—and I never will. [He looks at her fondly for a moment, touches her arm, then turns abruptly and goes out into the Hall.]

*Twentieth Century Blues*

Where's your mother? Where's George?  
[MIKE, in a blue suit, comes in from the Porch. He goes to the table and puts a cigarette out there.]

MIKE. Good morning.

TRACY. Oh, hello!

MIKE. I was taking the air. I like it, but it doesn't like me.—Hello, Dinah.

DINAH [*replies with great dignity*]. How do you do?

TRACY. Did—did you have a good sleep?

MIKE. Wonderful. How about you?

TRACY. Marvelous. Have you ever seen a handsomer day?

MIKE. Never. What did it set you back?

TRACY. I got it for nothing, for being a good girl.

MIKE. Good. [*There is a brief silence. They look at DINAH, who is regarding them fixedly.*]

DINAH. I'm going, don't worry. [*She moves toward the Parlor doors.*]

TRACY. Why should you?

DINAH. I guess you must have things you wish to discuss.

TRACY. "Things to"—? What are you talking about!

DINAH. Only remember, it's getting late. [*Gingerly she opens the Parlor doors a crack, and peers in.*] Some of them are in already. My, they look solemn. [*She moves toward the Hall.*] I'll be ready when you are! [*And goes out.*]

TRACY. She's always trying to make situations.—How's your work coming—are you doing us up brown?

MIKE. I've—somehow I've lost my angle.

TRACY. How do you mean, Mike?

MIKE. I've just got so damn tolerant all at once, I doubt if I'll ever be able to write another line. [*TRACY laughs uncertainly.*]

TRACY. You are a fellow, Mike.

MIKE. Or the mug of this world: I don't know.

TRACY. When you're at the work you ought to be doing, you'll soon see that tolerance—What's the matter with your chin?

MIKE. Does it show?

TRACY. A little. What happened?

MIKE. I guess I just stuck it out too far.

TRACY.—Into a door, in the dark?

MIKE. That's it. [*His voice lowers solicitously.*] Are you—are you all right, Tracy?  
[*The startled look comes back into her eyes. She laughs, to cover it.*]

TRACY. Me? Of course! Why shouldn't I be?

MIKE. That was a flock of wine we put away.

TRACY. I never felt better in my life. [*She moves away from him.*]

MIKE. That's fine. That's just daisy.

TRACY. I—I guess we're lucky both to have such good heads.

MIKE. Yes, I guess. [*He moves toward her.*]

TRACY. It must be awful for people who—you know—get up and make speeches or—or try to start a fight—or, you know, misbehave in general.

MIKE. It certainly must.

TRACY. It must be—some sort of hidden weakness coming out.

MIKE. Weakness? I'm not so sure of that. [*Again she moves away from him.*]

TRACY. Anyhow, I had a simply wonderful evening. I hope you enjoyed it too.

MIKE. I enjoyed the last part of it. [*She turns to him uncertainly.*]

TRACY. Really? Why—why especially the last?

MIKE. Are you asking me, Tracy?

TRACY. Oh, you mean the swim!—We did swim, and so forth, didn't we?

MIKE. We swam, and so forth. [*She advances to him suddenly.*]

TRACY. Mike—

## The Philadelphia Story

MIKE [*gazing*]. You darling, darling girl—

TRACY. Mike!

MIKE. What can I say to you? Tell me, darling— [*She recovers herself and again moves away.*]

TRACY. Not anything—don't say anything. And especially not "Darling."

MIKE. Never in this world will I ever forget you.

TRACY.—Not anything, I said.

MIKE. You're going to go through with it, then—

TRACY. Through with what?

MIKE. The wedding.

TRACY. Why—why shouldn't I?

MIKE. Well, you see, I've made a funny discovery: that in spite of the fact that someone's up from the bottom, he may be quite a heel. And that even though someone else is born to the purple, he still may be quite a guy.—Hell, I'm only saying what you said last night!

TRACY. I said a lot of things last night, it seems.

MIKE [*after a moment*]. All right, no dice. But understand: also no regrets about last night.

\*TRACY. Why should I have?

MIKE. That's it! That's the stuff; you're wonderful. You're aces, Tracy. [*Now she is in full retreat.*]

TRACY. You don't know what I mean! I'm asking you—tell me straight out—tell me the reason why I should have any— [*But she cannot finish. Her head drops.*] No—don't.—Just tell me—what time is it?

MIKE [*glancing at his wrist*]. It's—what's happened to my wrist watch? [*TRACY stops, frozen, speaks without turning.*]

TRACY. Why? Is it broken?

MIKE. It's gone. I've lost it somewhere.

TRACY [*after a moment*]. I can't tell you how extremely sorry I am to hear that.

MIKE. Oh, well—I'd always just as soon not know the time.

TRACY [*her back to him*]. There on the table—

MIKE.—What is? [*He goes to the table, finds the watch.*] Well, for the love of—! Who found it? I'll give a reward, or something. [*He straps the watch on his wrist.*]

TRACY. I don't think any reward will be expected. [*She drops miserably down into an armchair. DEXTER comes in from the Porch, a small glass in hand.*]

DEXTER. Now then! This medicine indicated in cases of— [*He stops at the sight of MIKE.*] Hello, Connor. How are you?

MIKE. About as you'd think.—Is that for me?

DEXTER. For Tracy.—Why? Would you like one?

MIKE. I would sell my grandmother for a drink—and you know how I love my grandmother.

DEXTER. Uncle Willie's around in the pantry, doing weird and wonderful things. Just say I said, One of the same. [*MIKE moves toward the Porch.*]

MIKE. Is it all right if I say Two?

DEXTER. That's between you and your grandmother. [*MIKE goes out. DEXTER calls after him.*]—And find Liz! [*DEXTER goes to TRACY with the drink.*] Doctor's orders, Tray.

TRACY. What is it?

DEXTER. Just the juice of a few flowers. [*TRACY takes the glass and looks at it, and tastes it.*]

TRACY. Peppermint— [*DEXTER smiles.*]

DEXTER.—White.—And one other simple ingredient. It's called a stinger. It removes the sting. [*TRACY sets the glass down and looks away.*]

TRACY. Oh, Dext—don't say that!

## Twentieth Century Blues

DEXTER. Why not, Tray?

TRACY.—Nothing will—nothing ever can! [*She rises from the chair.*] Oh, Dexter—I've done the most terrible thing to you!

DEXTER [*after a moment*]. To me, did you say? [*She nods vigorously.*] I doubt that, Red. I doubt it very much.

TRACY. You don't know, you don't know!

DEXTER. Well, maybe I shouldn't.

TRACY. You've got to—you must! I couldn't stand it, if you didn't! Oh, Dexter—what am I going to do?

DEXTER.—But why to me, Darling? [*She looks at him.*] Where do I come into it any more? [*Still she looks.*] Aren't you confusing me with someone else?—A fellow named Kittredge, or something?

TRACY [*a sudden, awful thought*]. George—

DEXTER. That's right; George Kittredge. A splendid chap—very high morals—very broad shoulders.—[*TRACY goes to the telephone.*]

TRACY. I've got to tell him. [DEXTER follows her.]

DEXTER. Tell him what?

TRACY. I've got to tell him! [*She dials a number.*]

DEXTER. But if he's got any brain at all, he'll have realized by this time what a fool he made of himself, when he—

TRACY.—When he what? [*To the telephone.*] Hello? Hello, George—this is Tracy. Look—I don't care whether it's bad luck or not, but I've got to see you for a minute before the wedding.—What? What note? I didn't get any note.—When? Well, why didn't someone tell me?—Right! Come on the run. [*She replaces the telephone, goes up to the fireplace, finds the wall bell and rings it.*] He sent a note over at ten o'clock.

DEXTER. I told you he'd come to his senses. [TRACY turns slowly.]

TRACY. Was—was he here, too?

DEXTER. Sure.

TRACY. My God—why didn't you sell tickets? [DEXTER brings her her drink.]

DEXTER. Finish your drink.

TRACY. Will it help?

DEXTER. There's always the hope. [EDWARD comes into the Hall doorway.]

EDWARD. You rang, Miss?

TRACY. Isn't there a note for me from Mr. Kittredge somewhere?

EDWARD. I believe it was put on the hall table upstairs. Mrs. Lord said not to disturb you.

TRACY. I'd like to have it, if I may.

EDWARD. Very well, Miss. [*He goes out, TRACY finishes her drink and gives DEXTER the empty glass.*]

TRACY. Say something, Dext—anything.

DEXTER. No—you do.

TRACY. Oh, Dext—I'm wicked! [*She moves away from him.*] I'm such an unholy mess of a girl.

DEXTER. That's no good. That's not even conversation.

TRACY. But never in all my life—not if I live to be a hundred—will I ever forget the way you tried to—to stand me on my feet again this morning.

DEXTER. You—you're in grand shape. Tell me: what did you think of my wedding present? I like my presents at least to be acknowledged.

TRACY. It was beautiful and sweet, Dext.

DEXTER. She was quite a boat, the "True Love."

TRACY. Was, and is.

DEXTER. She had the same initials as yours—did you ever realize that? [TRACY seats herself in the armchair at left of the table.]

TRACY. No, I never did.

*the Philadelphia Story*

DEXTER. Nor did I, till I last saw her.— Funny we missed it. My, she was yare.

TRACY. She was yare, all right. [*A moment.*] I wasn't, was I?

DEXTER. Wasn't what?

TRACY. Yare. [DEXTER laughs shortly and seats himself in the chair across the table from her.]

DEXTER. Not very!—You were good at the bright-work, though. I'll never forget you down on your knees on the deck every morning, with your little can of polish. [*They speak without looking at each other, straight out in front of them.*]

TRACY. I wouldn't let even you help, would I?

DEXTER. Not even me.

TRACY. I made her shine.—Where is she now?

DEXTER. In the yard at Seven Hundred Acre, getting gone over. I'm going to sell her to Rufe Watriss at Oyster Bay. [*There is a silence. Then she speaks, incredulously.*]

TRACY. You're going to sell the "True Love"?

DEXTER. Why not?

TRACY. For money?

DEXTER. He wired an offer yesterday.

TRACY.—To *that* fat old rum pot?

DEXTER. What the hell does it matter?

TRACY. She's too clean, she's too yare!

DEXTER. I know—but when you're through with a boat, you're— [*He looks at her.*] That is, of course, unless you want her. [*She turns away, without replying.*] Of course she's good for nothing but racing—and only really comfortable for two people—and not so damned so, for them. So I naturally thought— But of course, if you should want her—

TRACY. No—I don't want her.

DEXTER. I'm going to design another for myself, along a little more practical lines.

TRACY. Are you?

DEXTER. I started on the drawings a couple of weeks ago.

TRACY. What will you call her?

DEXTER. I thought the "True Love II." —What do you think? [TRACY rises abruptly.]

TRACY. Dexter, if you call any boat that, I promise you I'll blow you and it right out of the water!

DEXTER. I know it's not very imaginative, but—

TRACY. Just try it, that's all! [*She moves away from him.*] I'll tell you what you can call it, if you like—

DEXTER. What?

TRACY. In fond remembrance of me—

DEXTER. What?

TRACY. The "Easy Virtue." [DEXTER goes to her.]

DEXTER. Tray, I'll be damned if I'll have you thinking such things of yourself!

TRACY. What would you like me to think?

DEXTER. I don't know. But I do know that virtue, so-called, is no matter of a single misstep or two.

TRACY. You don't think so?

DEXTER. I know so. It's something inherent, it's something regardless of anything.

TRACY. Like fun it is.

DEXTER. You're wrong. The occasional misdeeds are often as good for a person as—as the more persistent virtues.—That is, if the person is there. Maybe you haven't committed enough, Tray. Maybe this is your coming-of-age.

TRACY. I don't know.—Oh, I don't know anything any more!

DEXTER. That sounds very hopeful. That's just fine, Tray.

TRACY. Oh, be still, you! [EDWARD comes in with a note on a tray.] Thanks, Edward.



## Twentieth Century Blues

EDWARD. They are practically all in, Miss—and quite a number standing in the back. [*MIKE and LIZ comes in from the Porch.*] All our best wishes, Miss.

TRACY. Thanks, Edward. Thanks, very much.

LIZ.—And all ours, Tracy.

TRACY. Thank you, thank everybody. [*EDWARD goes out, into the Hall, passing SANDY, who rushes in and up to TRACY. He wears a short morning coat.*]

SANDY. Tray—he's here! He's arrived!

TRACY [*opening the note*]. Who has?

SANDY. Kidd—Sidney Kidd.

TRACY. What for? What does *he* want?

LIZ. May I scream?

MIKE. What the—!

TRACY. Oh, now I remember!

SANDY. Well, I should hope you did. I haven't been to bed at all. I gave him the Profile. He's reading it now. I couldn't stand the suspense, so I—

MIKE. Profile, did you say? What profile?

SANDY. The Kidd himself, complete with photographs. Do you want to see a copy?

MIKE. Holy St. Rose of South Bend!

SANDY.—Offered in exchange for yours of us. I told him what a help you've both been to me.

LIZ. I don't think you'll find it so hard to resign now, Mike. Me neither.

MIKE. That's all right with me.

LIZ. Belts will be worn tighter this winter.

SANDY. I'll see how he's bearing up. [*He moves toward the Hall, meeting DR. PARSONS, a middle-aged clergyman, in surplice and stole, as he comes in.*] Good morning, Dr. Parsons. How's everything?

DR. PARSONS. Where is your sister? [*SANDY points to her and goes out. TRACY is now reading the note. DR. PARSONS calls*

*to her.*] Tracy? Tracy! [*She looks up startled.*]

TRACY. Yes? [*He smiles, and beckons engagingly.*]

DEXTER. One minute, Dr. Parsons, Mr. Kittredge is on his way. [*DR. PARSONS smiles again, and goes out into the Parlor, carefully closing the door behind him. DEXTER turns to TRACY.*] I'm afraid it's the deadline, Tracy.

TRACY. So is this. Listen—"My dear Tracy: Your conduct last night was so shocking to my ideals of womanhood, that my attitude toward you and the prospects of a happy and useful life together, has changed materially. Your, to me, totally unexpected breach of common decency, not to mention the moral aspect—" [*GEORGE comes in from the Porch.*]

GEORGE. Tracy!

TRACY. Hello, George.

GEORGE. Tracy—all these people!

TRACY. It's only a letter from a friend. They're my friends, too. "—not to mention the moral aspect, certainly entitles me to a full explanation, before going through with our proposed marriage. In the light of day, I am sure that you will agree with me. Otherwise, with profound regrets and all best wishes, yours very sincerely—" [*She folds the note and returns it to its envelope.*] Yes, George, I quite agree with you—in the light of day or the dark of night, for richer, for poorer, for better, for worse, in sickness and in health—and thank you so very much for your good wishes at this time.

GEORGE. That's all you've got to say?

TRACY. What else? I wish for your sake, as well as mine, I had an explanation. But unfortunately, I've none. You'd better just say "good riddance," George.

GEORGE. It isn't easy, you know.

TRACY. I don't see why.

## *The Philadelphia Story*

LIZ [*to MIKE*]. Say something, Stupid.

MIKE. Wait a minute. [*Preparatory music—Debussy—is now faintly heard from the Parlor.*]

GEORGE. You'll grant I had a right to be angry, and very angry.

TRACY. You certainly had, you certainly have.

GEORGE. "For your sake, as well," you said—

TRACY. Yes—it would be nice to know.

LIZ [*to MIKE*]. Will you say something?

MIKE. Wait!

LIZ. What for?

MIKE. Enough rope.

GEORGE.—On the very eve of your wedding, an affair with another man—

TRACY. I told you I agreed, George—and I tell you again: good riddance to me.

GEORGE. That's for me to decide.

TRACY. Well, I wish you would a—a—little more quickly.

MIKE. Look, Kittredge—

TRACY. If there was some way to make you see that—that regardless of it—or even because of it—I'm—somehow I feel more of a person, George.

GEORGE. That's a little difficult to understand. [*Tracy lets herself down into an armchair.*]

TRACY. Yes, I can see that it would be.

DEXTER. Not necessarily.

GEORGE. You keep out of it!

DEXTER. You forget: I am out of it. [*He seats himself upon the sofa, away from them all.*]

MIKE [*advancing*]. Kittredge, it just might interest you to know that the so-called "affair" consisted of exactly two kisses and one rather late swim.

TRACY [*unwilling to accept the gallant gesture*]. Thanks, Mike, but there's no need to— [*MIKE turns to her.*]

MIKE. All of which I thoroughly en-

joyed, and the memory of which I wouldn't part with for anything.

TRACY. It's no use, Mike.

MIKE [*again to GEORGE*].—After which, I accompanied her to her room, deposited her on her bed, and promptly returned to you two on the porch—as you will doubtless remember.

DEXTER. Doubtless without a doubt.

GEORGE. You mean to say that was all there was to it?

MIKE. I do. [*GEORGE ponders. TRACY is looking at MIKE in astonishment. Suddenly she rises and demands indignantly of him.*]

TRACY. Why? Was I so damned unattractive—so distant, so forbidding, or something, that—?

GEORGE. This is fine talk, too!

TRACY. I'm asking a question! [*The music has stopped now.*]

MIKE. You were extremely attractive—and as for "distant and forbidding," on the contrary. But you were also somewhat the worse—or the better—for wine, and there are rules about that, damn it.

TRACY [*after a moment*]. Thank you, Mike. I think men are wonderful.

LIZ. The little dears.

GEORGE. Well, that's a relief, I'll admit. Still—

TRACY. Why? Where's the difference? If my wonderful, marvelous, beautiful virtue is still intact, it's no thanks to me, I assure you.

GEORGE. I don't think you—

TRACY.—It's purely by courtesy of the gentleman from South Bend.

LIZ. Local papers, please copy.

GEORGE. I fail to see the humor in this situation, Miss Imbrie.

LIZ. I appreciate that. It was a little hard for me too, at first—

## Twentieth Century Blues

TRACY. Oh, Liz— [*She goes to her, gropes for her hand.*]

LIZ. It's all right, Tracy. We all go a little haywire at times—and if we don't, maybe we ought to.

TRACY. Liz.

LIZ. You see, it really wasn't Tracy at all, Mr. Kittredge. It was another girl: a Miss Pommery, '28.

GEORGE. You'd had too much to drink—

TRACY. That seems to be the consensus of opinion.

GEORGE. Will you promise me never to touch the stuff again? [*She looks at him, speaking slowly.*]

TRACY. No, George, I don't believe I will. There are certain things about that other girl I rather like.

GEORGE. But a man expects his wife to—

TRACY.—To behave herself. Naturally.

DEXTER. To behave herself naturally. [*GEORGE glances angrily at him.*] Sorry.

GEORGE [*to TRACY*]. But if it hadn't been for the drink last night, all this might not have happened.

TRACY. But apparently nothing did. What made you think it had?

GEORGE. It didn't take much imagination, I can tell you that.

TRACY. Not much, perhaps—but just of a certain kind.

GEORGE. It seems *you* didn't think any too well of yourself.

TRACY. That's the odd thing, George: somehow I'd have hoped you'd think better of me than I did.

GEORGE. I'm not going to quibble, Tracy: all the evidence was there.

TRACY. And I was guilty straight off—that is, until I was proved innocent.

GEORGE. Well?

DEXTER. Downright un-American, if you ask me.

GEORGE. No one is asking you! [*SANDY*

*comes into the Hall doorway, consternation on his face.*]

SANDY. Listen—he's read it—and holy cats, guess what?

LIZ. What?

SANDY. He loves it! He says it's brilliant— He wants it for *Destiny*!

MIKE. I give up.

GEORGE. Who wants what?

LIZ. Sidney Kidd—Sidney Kidd.

GEORGE [*hardly believing the good news.*] Sidney Kidd is here himself?!

SANDY. Big as life, and twice as handsome. Boy, is this wedding a National Affair now! [*He goes out.*]

GEORGE [*after a moment*]. It's extremely kind and thoughtful of him. [*Another moment. Then.*] Come on, Tracy—it must be late. Let's let bygones be bygones—what do you say?

TRACY. Yes—and good-by, George.

GEORGE. I don't understand you.

TRACY. Please—good-by.

GEORGE. But what on earth—?

LIZ. I imagine she means that your explanation is inadequate.

GEORGE. Look here, Tracy—

TRACY. You're too good for me, George. You're a hundred times too good.

GEORGE. I never said I—

TRACY. And I'd make you most unhappy, most.—That is, I'd do my best to. [*GEORGE looks at her.*]

GEORGE. Well, if that's the way you want it—

TRACY. That is the way it is.

GEORGE. All right. Possibly it's just as well. [*He starts toward the Hall.*]

DEXTER. I thought you'd eventually think so. [*GEORGE turns and confronts him.*]

GEORGE. I've got a feeling you've had more to do with this than anyone.

## The Philadelphia Story

DEXTER. A novel and interesting idea, I'm sure.

GEORGE. You and your whole rotten class.

DEXTER. Oh, class my—! [*But he stops himself.*]

MIKE. Funny—I heard a truck driver say that yesterday—only with a short "a."

GEORGE. Listen: you're all on your way out—the lot of you—and don't think you aren't.—Yes, and good riddance! [*He goes out.*]

MIKE. Well, there goes George. [*Again the orchestra is heard. This time it is "Oh Promise Me." TRACY moves swiftly to the Parlor doors, opens them slightly, peers in, and exclaims.*]

TRACY. Oh, my sainted aunt—that welter of faces! [*She closes the doors and returns.*] What in the name of all that's holy am I to do? [*MAY, the housemaid, comes in with TRACY's hat and gloves.*]

MAY. You forgot your hat, Miss Tracy. [*TRACY takes the broad-brimmed hat, the immaculate gloves, and gazes at them helplessly.*]

TRACY. Oh, God— Oh, dear God—have mercy on Tracy! [*MIKE rises and goes to her.*]

MIKE. Tracy—

TRACY. Yes, Mike?

MIKE. Forget the license!

TRACY. License? [*DEXTER fumbles in his pocket.*]

DEXTER. I've got an old one here that we never used, Maryland being quicker—

MIKE. Forget it! [*To TRACY.*] Old Parson Parsons—he's never seen Kittredge, has he? Nor have most of the others. I got you into this, I'll get you out.—Will you marry me, Tracy? [*She looks at him for a long, grateful moment before speaking. Then.*]

TRACY. No, Mike.—Thanks, but no.

MIKE. But listen: I've never asked a girl to marry me before in my life!—I've avoided it!—You've got me all confused—why not—?

TRACY.—Because I don't think Liz would like it—and I'm not sure that you would—and I'm even a little doubtful about myself.—But I'm beholden to you, Mike, I'm most beholden. [*MIKE gestures impatiently.*]

MIKE. They're in there! They're waiting!

LIZ. Don't get too conventional all at once, will you?—There'll be a reaction.

MIKE [*an appeal*]. Liz—

LIZ. I count on your sustaining the mood. [*She beckons to him and he joins her. DEXTER rises.*]

DEXTER. It'll be all right, Tracy: you've been got out of jams before.

TRACY.—Been got out of them, did you say?

DEXTER. That's what I said, Tracy. Don't worry, you always are. [*MARGARET and SETH come in from the Hall.*]

MARGARET. Tracy, we met George in the hall—it's all right, dear: your father will make a very simple announcement.

SETH. Is there anything special you want me to say?

TRACY. No! I'll say it, whatever it is.—I won't be got out of anything more, thanks. [*She moves to the Parlor door. UNCLE WILLIE and DINAH enter from the Hall.*]

UNCLE WILLIE. What's a-lack? What's amiss?

MARGARET. Oh, this just can't be happening—it can't! [*TRACY throws open the Parlor doors and stands in the doorway gazing into the Parlor. She addresses her wedding guests.*]

TRACY. I'm—I'm—hello! Good morning.—I'm—that is to say—I'm terribly sorry

## Twentieth Century Blues

to have kept you waiting, but—but there's been a little hitch in the proceedings. I've made a terrible fool of myself—which isn't unusual—and my fiancé—my fiancé—*[She stops and swallows.]*

MARGARET. Seth!

SETH. Wait, my dear.

TRACY.—my fiancé, that was, that is—he thinks we'd better call it a day and I quite agree with him. *[She half turns and whispers.]* Dexter—Dexter—what the hell next?

DEXTER. "Two years ago you were invited to a wedding in this house and I did you out of it by eloping to Maryland—" *[He moves swiftly to MARGARET.]*

TRACY. "Two years ago you were invited to a wedding in this house and I did you out of it by eloping to Maryland—" *[Then, desperately.]* Dexter, Dexter, where are you? DEXTER *[simultaneously, to MARGARET.]* May I? Just as a loan? *[He takes a ring from her finger and goes to MIKE with it.]* Here, put this in your vest pocket.

MIKE. But I haven't got a vest.

DEXTER. Then hold it in your hand! *[He goes quickly to TRACY.]*

DEXTER. "Which was very bad manners—"

TRACY *[into the Parlor]*. "—Which was very bad manners—"

DEXTER. "But I hope to make it up to you by going through with it now, as originally planned."

TRACY. "But I hope to make it up to you by—by going—" *[Suddenly she realizes what she is saying and turns to DEXTER with blank wonder in her eyes. He gestures, and she turns again and continues.]*—by going beautifully through with it

now—as originally and—most beautifully—planned. *[DEXTER moves to MIKE.]*

DEXTER. I'd like you to be my best man, if you will, because I think you're one hell of a guy, Mike.

MIKE. I'd be honored, C. K.

UNCLE WILLIE. Ladies, follow me! No rushing please! *[LIZ and MARGARET go out with him into the Hall.]*

TRACY *[simultaneously, into the Parlor]*.—Because there's something awfully nice about a wedding—I don't know—they're so gay and attractive—and I've always wanted one, and—

DEXTER. "So if you'll just keep your seats a minute—"

TRACY. "So if you'll just keep your seats a minute—"

DEXTER. That's all.

TRACY. "That's all!" *[She closes the doors and turns breathlessly to DEXTER.]* Dexter—are you sure?

DEXTER. Not in the least.—But I'll risk it—will you?

TRACY. You bet!—And you didn't do it just to soften the blow?

DEXTER. No, Tray.

TRACY. Nor to save my face?

DEXTER. It's a nice little face.

TRACY. Oh—I'll be yare now—I'll promise to be yare!

DEXTER. Be whatever you like, you're my Redhead.—All set?

TRACY. All set! *[She runs and snatches her hat from a chair, puts it on before a mirror.]*—Oh, how did this ever happen?

SETH. Don't inquire.—Go on, Dinah: tell Mr. Dutton to start the music. *[DINAH goes out into the Hall, exclaiming triumphantly.]*

DINAH. I did it—I did it all! *[DEXTER and MIKE go to the Hall doorway, wait there for the signal; SETH turns to TRACY.]*

SETH. Daughter— *[She moves to him.]*

## *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*

TRACY. I love you, Father.

SETH. And I love you, daughter.

TRACY. Never in my life have I been so full of love before.—[*The Wedding March begins to be heard from the Parlor.*]

DEXTER. See you soon, Red!

TRACY. See you soon, Dext! [DEXTER and MIKE go out. TRACY stands before SETH.] How do I look?

SETH. Like a queen—like a goddess.

TRACY. Do you know how I feel?

SETH. How?

TRACY. Like a human—like a human being! [SETH smiles.]

SETH.—And is that all right? [*She tightens her arm in his. They start to move slowly across the room in the direction of the Parlor.*]

TRACY. All right? Oh, Father, it's Heaven!

CURTAIN

## THE LOVE SONG OF J. ALFRED PRUFROCK

by T. S. ELIOT

*S'io credesse che mia risposta fosse  
A persona che mai tornasse al mondo,  
Questa fiamma staria senza piu scosse.  
Ma perciocche giammai di questo fondo  
Non torno vivo alcun, s'i'odo il vero,  
Senza tema d'infamia ti rispondo.*

Let us go then, you and I,  
When the evening is spread out against the sky  
Like a patient etherized upon a table;  
Let us go, through certain half-deserted streets,  
The muttering retreats  
Of restless nights in one-night cheap hotels  
And sawdust restaurants with oyster-shells:  
Streets that follow like a tedious argument  
Of insidious intent  
To lead you to an overwhelming question. . .  
Oh, do not ask, "What is it?"  
Let us go and make our visit.

In the room the women come and go  
Talking of Michelangelo.

The yellow fog that rubs its back upon the window-panes,  
The yellow smoke that rubs its muzzle on the window-panes  
Licked its tongue into the corners of the evening,  
Lingered upon the pools that stand in drains,

From *Collected Poems of T. S. Eliot*. Copyright, 1936, by Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc.

### *Twentieth Century Blues*

Let fall upon its back the soot that falls from chimneys,  
Slipped by the terrace, made a sudden leap,  
And seeing that it was a soft October night,  
Curled once about the house, and fell asleep.

And indeed there will be time  
For the yellow smoke that slides along the street,  
Rubbing its back upon the window-panes;  
There will be time, there will be time  
To prepare a face to meet the faces that you meet;  
There will be time to murder and create,  
And time for all the works and days of hands  
That lift and drop a question on your plate;  
Time for you and time for me,  
And time yet for a hundred indecisions,  
And for a hundred visions and revisions,  
Before the taking of a toast and tea.

In the room the women come and go  
Talking of Michelangelo.

And indeed there will be time  
To wonder, "Do I dare?" and, "Do I dare?"  
Time to turn back and descend the stair,  
With a bald spot in the middle of my hair—  
(They will say: "How his hair is growing thin!")  
My morning coat, my collar mounting firmly to the chin  
My necktie rich and modest, but asserted by a simple pin—  
(They will say: "But how his arms and legs are thin!")  
Do I dare  
Disturb the universe?  
In a minute there is time  
For decisions and revisions which a minute will reverse.

For I have known them all already, known them all—  
Have known the evenings, mornings, afternoons,  
I have measured out my life with coffee spoons;  
I know the voices dying with a dying fall  
Beneath the music from a farther room.  
So how should I presume?

And I have known the eyes already, known them all—  
The eyes that fix you in a formulated phrase,  
And when I am formulated, sprawling on a pin,

*The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*

When I am pinned and wriggling on the wall,  
Then how should I begin  
To spit out all the butt-ends of my days and ways?  
And how should I presume?

And I have known the arms already, known them all—  
Arms that are braceleted and white and bare  
(But in the lamplight, downed with light brown hair!)  
Is it perfume from a dress  
That makes me so digress?  
Arms that lie along a table, or wrap about a shawl.  
And should I then presume?  
And how should I begin?

Shall I say, I have gone at dusk through narrow streets  
And watched the smoke that rises from the pipes  
Of lonely men in shirt-sleeves, leaning out of windows? . . .

I should have been a pair of ragged claws  
Scuttling across the floors of silent seas.

And the afternoon, the evening, sleeps so peacefully!  
Smoothed by long fingers,  
Asleep . . . tired . . . or it malingers,  
Stretched on the floor, here beside you and me.  
Should I, after tea and cakes and ices,  
Have the strength to force the moment to its crisis?  
But though I have wept and fasted, wept and prayed,  
Though I have seen my head (grown slightly bald) brought in upon a platter,  
I am no prophet—and here's no great matter;  
I have seen the moment of my greatness flicker,  
And I have seen the eternal Footman hold my coat, and snicker,  
And in short, I was afraid.

And would it have been worth it, after all,  
After the cups, the marmalade, the tea,  
Among the porcelain, among some talk of you and me,  
Would it have been worth while,  
To have bitten off the matter with a smile,  
To have squeezed the universe into a ball  
To roll it toward some overwhelming question,  
To say: "I am Lazarus, come from the dead,



## *Twentieth Century Blues*

Come back to tell you all, I shall tell you all"—  
If one, settling a pillow by her head,  
Should say: "That is not what I meant at all.  
That is not it, at all."

And would it have been worth it, after all,  
Would it have been worth while,  
After the sunsets and the dooryards and the sprinkled streets,  
After the novels, after the teacups, after the skirts that trail along the floor—  
And this, and so much more?—  
It is impossible to say just what I mean!  
But as if a magic lantern threw the nerves in patterns on a screen:  
Would it have been worth while  
If one, settling a pillow or throwing off a shawl,  
And turning toward the window, should say:  
"That is not it at all,  
That is not what I meant, at all.'

No! I am not Prince Hamlet, nor was meant to be;  
Am an attendant lord, one that will do  
To swell a progress, start a scene or two,  
Advise the prince; no doubt, an easy tool,  
Deferential, glad to be of use,  
Politic, cautious, and meticulous;  
Full of high sentence, but a bit obtuse;  
At times, indeed, almost ridiculous—  
Almost, at times, the Fool.

I grow old . . . I grow old . . .  
I shall wear the bottoms of my trousers rolled.

Shall I part my hair behind? Do I dare to eat a peach?  
I shall wear white flannel trousers, and walk upon the beach.  
I have heard the mermaids singing, each to each.

I do not think that they will sing to me.

I have seen them riding seaward on the waves  
Combing the white hair of the waves blown back  
When the wind blows the water white and black.

We have lingered in the chambers of the sea  
By sea-girls wreathed with seaweed red and brown  
Till human voices wake us, and we drown.



*"Promise you'll wait for me. I want something real to come back to."*

*Permission The New Yorker. Copyright The F.R. Publishing Corporation.*

## PORTRAIT OF A LADY

by T. S. ELIOT

Thou hast committed—  
Fornication: but that was in another country,  
And besides, the wench is dead.

—*The Jew of Malta.*

### I

Among the smoke and fog of a December  
afternoon  
You have the scene arrange itself—as it  
will seem to do—  
With “I have saved this afternoon for  
you”;  
And four wax candles in the darkened  
room,  
Four rings of light upon the ceiling over-  
head,  
An atmosphere of Juliet’s tomb  
Prepared for all the things to be said, or  
left unsaid.  
We have been, let us say, to hear the latest  
Pole  
Transmit the Preludes, through his hair  
and finger-tips.  
“So intimate, this Chopin, that I think his  
soul  
Should be resurrected only among friends  
Some two or three, who will not touch  
the bloom  
That is rubbed and questioned in the con-  
cert room.”

—And so the conversation slips  
Among velleities and carefully caught re-  
grets  
Through attenuated tones of violins  
Mingled with remote cornets  
And begins.  
“You do not know how much they mean  
to me, my friends,

And how, how rare and strange it is, to  
find

In a life composed so much, so much of  
odds and ends,

(For indeed I do not love it . . . you  
knew? you are not blind!

How keen you are!)

To find a friend who has these qualities,  
Who has, and gives

Those qualities upon which friendship  
lives.

How much it means that I say this to  
you—

Without these friendships—life, what  
*cauchemar!*”

Among the windings of the violins

And the ariettes

Of cracked cornets

Inside my brain a dull tom-tom begins

Absurdly hammering a prelude of its own,  
Capricious monotone

That is at least one definite “false note.”

—Let us take the air, in a tobacco trance,  
Admire the monuments,

Discuss the late events,

Correct our watches by the public clocks.

Then sit for half an hour and drink our  
bocks.

### II

Now that lilacs are in bloom

She has a bowl of lilacs in her room

And twists one in her fingers while she  
talks.

“Ah, my friend, you do not know, you  
do not know

What life is, you who hold it in your  
hands”;

From *Collected Poems of T. S. Eliot*. Copyright, 1936, by Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc.

## *Portrait of a Lady*

(Slowly twisting the lilac stalks)  
"You let it flow from you, you let it flow,  
And youth is cruel, and has no remorse  
And smiles at situations which it cannot  
see."

I smile, of course,  
And go on drinking tea.  
"Yet with these April sunsets, that some-  
how recall  
My buried life, and Paris in the Spring,  
I feel immeasurably at peace, and find the  
world  
To be wonderful and youthful, after all."

The voice returns like the insistent out-of-  
tune

Of a broken violin on an August after-  
noon:

"I am always sure that you understand  
My feelings, always sure that you feel,  
Sure that across the gulf you reach your  
hand.

You are invulnerable, you have no  
Achilles' heel.

You will go on, and when you have pre-  
vailed

You can say: at this point many a one has  
failed.

But what have I, but what have I, my  
friend,

To give you, what can you receive from  
me?

Only the friendship and the sympathy  
Of one about to reach her journey's end.

I shall sit here, serving tea to friends. . . ."

I take my hat: how can I make a cow-  
ardly amends

For what she has said to me?

You will see me any morning in the park  
Reading the comics and the sporting page.  
Particularly I remark

An English countess goes upon the stage.  
A Greek was murdered at a Polish dance,  
Another bank defaulter has confessed.

I keep my countenance,  
I remain self-possessed  
Except when a street piano, mechanical  
and tired

Reiterates some worn-out common song  
With the smell of hyacinths across the  
garden

Recallings things that other people have  
desired.

Are these ideas right or wrong?

### III

The October night comes down; return-  
ing as before

Except for a slight sensation of being ill  
at ease

I mount the stairs and turn the handle  
of the door

And feel as 'if I had mounted on my  
hands and knees.

"And so you are going abroad; and when  
do you return?

But that's a useless question.

You hardly know when you are coming  
back,

You will find so much to learn."

My smile falls heavily among the bric-à-  
brac.

"Perhaps you can write to me."

My self-possession flares up for a second;  
*This* is as I had reckoned.

"I have been wondering frequently of late  
(But our beginnings never know our  
ends!)

Why we have not developed into friends."  
I feel like one who smiles, and turning  
shall remark

Suddenly, his expression in a glass.

## *Twentieth Century Blues*

My self-possession gutters; we are really  
in the dark.

"For everybody said so, all our friends,  
They all were sure our feelings would re-  
late

So closely! I myself can hardly under-  
stand.

We must leave it now to fate.

You will write, at any rate.

Perhaps it is not too late.

I shall sit here, serving tea to friends."

And I must borrow every changing shape  
To find expression . . . dance, dance  
Like a dancing bear,  
Cry like a parrot, chatter like an ape.  
Let us take the air, in a tobacco trance—

Well! and what if she should die some  
afternoon,

Afternoon gray and smoky, evening yel-  
low and rose;

Should die and leave me sitting pen in  
hand

With the smoke coming down above the  
housetops;

Doubtful, for a while

Not knowing what to feel or if I under-  
stand

Or whether wise or foolish, tardy or too  
soon . . .

Would she not have the advantage, after  
all?

This music is successful with a "dying  
fall"

Now that we talk of dying—

And should I have the right to smile?

## THE HOLLOW MEN

*by T. S. ELIOT*

A penny for the Old Guy.

MISTAH KURTZ—HE DEAD.

I

We are the hollow men  
We are the stuffed men  
Leaning together  
Headpiece filled with straw. Alas!  
Our dried voices, when  
We whisper together  
Are quiet and meaningless  
As wind in dry grass  
Or rats' feet over broken glass  
In our dry cellar

Shape without form, shade without colour,  
Paralysed force, gesture without motion;

Those who have crossed

With direct eyes, to death's other King-  
dom

Remember us—if at all—not as lost

Violent souls, but only

As the hollow men

The stuffed men.

II

Eyes I dare not meet in dreams

In death's dream kingdom

These do not appear:

There, the eyes are

Sunlight on a broken column

There, is a tree swinging

And voices are

In the wind's singing

*From Collected Poems of T. S. Eliot. Copyright, 1936, by Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc.*

## *The Hollow Men*

More distant and more solemn  
Than a fading star.

Let me be no nearer  
In death's dream kingdom  
Let me also wear  
Such deliberate disguises  
Rat's skin, crowskin, crossed staves  
In a field  
Behaving as the wind behaves  
No nearer—

Not that final meeting  
In the twilight kingdom

### III

This is the dead land  
This is cactus land  
Here the stone images  
Are raised, here they receive  
The supplication of a dead man's hand  
Under the twinkle of a fading star.

Is it like this  
In death's other kingdom  
Waking alone  
At the hour when we are  
Trembling with tenderness  
Lips that would kiss  
Form prayers to broken stone.

### IV

The eyes are not here  
There are no eyes here  
In this valley of dying stars  
In this hollow valley  
This broken jaw of our lost kingdoms

In this last of meeting places  
We grope together  
And avoid speech  
Gathered on this beach of the tumid river

Sightless, unless  
The eyes reappear  
As the perpetual star  
Multifoliate rose  
Of death's twilight kingdom  
The hope only  
Of empty men.

### V

*Here we go round the prickly pear  
Prickly pear prickly pear  
Here we go round the prickly pear  
At five o'clock in the morning.*

Between the idea  
And the reality  
Between the motion  
And the act  
Falls the Shadow  
*For Thine is the Kingdom*

Between the conception  
And the creation  
Between the emotion  
And the response  
Falls the Shadow  
*Life is very long*

Between the desire  
And the spasm  
Between the potency  
And the existence  
Between the essence  
And the descent  
Falls the Shadow  
*For Thine is the Kingdom*

For Thine is  
Life is  
For Thine is the

*This is the way the world ends  
This is the way the world ends  
This is the way the world ends  
Not with a bang but a whimper.*

## CASINO

by W. H. AUDEN

Only the hands are living; to the wheel attracted,  
Are moved as deer trek desperately towards a creek  
Through the dust and scrub of the desert, or gently  
As sunflowers turn to the light.

And, as the night takes up the cries of feverish children,  
The cravings of lions in dens, the loves of dons,  
Gathers them all and remains the night, the  
Great room is full of their prayers

To the last feast of isolation self-invited  
They flock, and in the rite of disbelief are joined;  
From numbers all their stars are recreated,  
The enchanted, the world, the sad.

Without, the rivers flow among the wholly living,  
Quite near their trysts; and the mountains part them; and the bird  
Deep in the greens and moistures of summer  
Sings towards their work.

But here no nymph comes naked to the youngest shepherd;  
The fountain is deserted; the laurel will not grow;  
The labyrinth is safe but endless, and broken  
Is Ariadne's thread.

As deeper in these hands is grooved their fortune: "Lucky  
Were few, and it is possible that none was loved;  
And what was godlike in this generation  
Was never to be born."

From *The Collected Poetry of W. H. Auden*. Copyright, 1945, by W. H. Auden. Reprinted by permission of Random House, Inc.

# BIOGRAPHY

## *A Comedy*

by S. N. BEHRMAN

### CHARACTERS

RICHARD KURT

MINNIE

MELCHIOR FEYDAK

MARION FROUDE

LEANDER NOLAN

WARWICK WILSON

ORRIN KINNICOTT

SLADE KINNICOTT

SCENES: *The entire action takes place in Marion Froude's studio in New York City.*

*The time is now.*

ACT I. *About five o'clock of an afternoon in November.*

ACT II. *Afternoon, three weeks later.*

ACT III. *Late afternoon, two weeks later.*

*The curtain will be lowered during the act to denote a lapse of time.*

### ACT I

[SCENE: *The studio-apartment of MARION FROUDE in an old-fashioned studio-building in West 57th St., New York. A great, cavernous room expressing in its polyglot furnishings the artistic patois of the various landlords who have sublet this apartment to wandering tenants like MARION FROUDE. The styles range from medieval Florence to contemporary Grand Rapids; on a movable raised platform in the center is a papal throne chair in red velvet and gold fringes. Not far from it is an ordinary American kitchen chair. The hanging lamp which sheds a mellow light over a French Empire sofa is filigreed copper Byzantine. Another and longer sofa across the room against the grand piano is in soft green velvet and has the gentility of a polite Park Avenue drawing room. Under the stairs, rear, which go up to MARION's bedroom, are stacks of her canvases. There is a quite fine wood carving of a Madonna which seems to be centuries old and in the*

*wall spaces looking at audience are great, dim canvases—copies by some former tenant left probably in lieu of rent—of Sargent's Lord Ribblesdale and Mme. X.*

*Whether it is due to the amenable spirit of the present incumbent or because they are relaxed in the democracy of art, these oddmenis of the creative spirit do not suggest disharmony. The room is warm, musty, with restful shadows and limpid lights. The enormous leaded window on the right, though some of its members are patched and cracked, gleams in the descending twilight with an opalescent light; even the copper cylinder of the fire extinguisher and its attendant ax, visible in the hall, seem to be not so much implements against calamity, as amusing museum-bits cherished from an earlier time. Every school is represented here except the modern. The studio has the mellowness of anachronism.*

*There is a door up-stage left leading to*



## Twentieth Century Blues

*the kitchen and MINNIE's bedroom door, center, under the stairs leads into hall-way. A door on the stair landing, center, leads to MINNIE's bedroom.*

TIME: *About five o'clock of an afternoon in November.*

AT RISE: RICHARD KURT is finishing a nervous cigarette. He has the essential audacity which comes from having seen the worst happen, from having endured the keenest pain. He has the hardness of one who knows that he can be devastated by pity, the bitterness which comes from having seen, in early youth, justice thwarted and tears unavailing, the self reliance which comes from having seen everything go in a disordered world save one, stubborn, unyielding core of belief—at everything else he laughs, in this alone he trusts. He has the intensity of the fanatic and the carelessness of the vagabond. He goes to the door from the hall and calls.]

KURT. Say, you, hello there—what's your name? [MINNIE, MARION FROUDE's inseparable maid, a German woman of about fifty, comes in. She is indignant at being thus summarily summoned, and by a stranger.]

MINNIE [*with dignity*]. My name iss Minnie if you please.

KURT. What time did Miss Froude go out?

MINNIE. About two o'clock.

KURT. It's nearly five now. She should be home, shouldn't she?

MINNIE. She said she vas coming home to tea and that is all I know.

KURT [*grimly*]. I know. She invited me to tea. . . . Where did she go to lunch?

MINNIE [*acidly*]. That I do not know.

KURT. Did someone call for her or did she go out alone? I have a reason for asking.

MINNIE. She went out alone. Any more questions?

KURT. No. I see there's no point in asking you questions.

MINNIE. Denn vy do you ask dem? [*The doorbell rings. MINNIE throws up her hands in despair. She goes out muttering: "Ach Gott." KURT is rather amused at her. He lights another cigarette. Sounds of vociferous greeting outside. "Ach mein lieber Herr Feydak. . . ." MELCHIOR FEYDAK, the Austrian composer, comes in. He is forty-five, tall, hook-nosed, thin-faced, a humorist with a rather sad face.*]

FEYDAK. Nun, Minnie, und vo is die schlechte . . . ? [MINNIE makes a sign to him not to disclose their free-masonry in the presence of strangers. She is cautious. . . .] Not home yet, eh, Minnie? Where is she? Well—well. How do they say—gallivanting—I love that word—gallivanting as usual. Well, I'll wait. It's humiliating—but I'll wait. Chilly! Brr! I don't mind so much being cold in London or Vienna. I expect it. But I can't stand it in New York. [*He warms himself before fire.*] And who is this young man?

MINNIE [*shortly*]. 'Ich weiss nicht! . . . Er hat alle fünf minuten gefragt wo sie ist— [*She goes out.*]

FEYDAK. You've offended Minnie I can see that.

KURT. That's just too bad!

FEYDAK. We 'all tremble before Minnie. . . . Been waiting long?

KURT. Over half an hour!

FEYDAK. Extraordinary thing—ever since I've known Marion there's always been someone waiting for her. There are two kinds of people in one's life—people whom one keeps waiting—and the people for whom one waits. . . .

KURT. Is that an epigram?

FEYDAK. Do you object to epigrams?

## Biography

KURT [*with some pride*]. I despise epigrams.

FEYDAK [*tolerantly sizing KURT up*]. Hm! Friend of Miss Froude's?

KURT. Not at all.

FEYDAK. That at least is no cause for pride.

KURT. I just don't happen to be that's all.

FEYDAK. I commiserate you.

KURT. I despise gallantry also.

FEYDAK [*lightly*]. And I thought Americans were so sentimental. . . .

KURT. And, together with other forms of glibness, I loathe generalization. . . .

FEYDAK [*drily*]. Young man, we have a great deal in common.

KURT. Also, there is a faint flavor of condescension in the way you say "young man" for which I don't really care. . . .

FEYDAK [*delighted and encouraging him to go on*]. What about me do you like? There must be something.

KURT. If I were that kind your question would embarrass me.

FEYDAK [*very pleased*]. Good for Marion!

KURT. Why do you say that?

FEYDAK. She always had a knack for picking up originals!

KURT. You are under a misapprehension. Miss Froude did not pick me up. I picked her up. [FEYDAK *stares at him*. *This does shock him*.] I wrote Miss Froude a letter—a business-letter. She answered and gave me an appointment for four-thirty. It is now after five. She has taken a half-hour out of my life. . . .

FEYDAK. I gather that fragment of time has great value. . . .

KURT. She has shortened my life by thirty minutes. God, how I hate Bohemians!

FEYDAK [*innocently*]. Are you by any chance—an Evangelist?

KURT. I am—for the moment—a business-man. I'm not here to hold hands or drink tea. I'm here on business. My presence here is a favor to Miss Froude and likely to bring her a handsome profit. . . .

FEYDAK. Profit! Ah! That accounts for her being late. . . .

KURT [*skeptically*]. You despise profit I suppose! Are you—by any chance—old-world?

FEYDAK. Young man, your technique is entirely wasted on me. . . .

KURT. Technique! What are you talking about?

FEYDAK. When I was a young man—before I achieved any sort of success—I was rude on principle. Deliberately rude and extravagantly bitter in order to make impression. When it is no longer necessary for you to wait around for people in order to do them favors you'll mellow down I assure you.

KURT [*fiercely, he has been touched*]. You think so, do you! That's where you're mistaken! I'm rude now. When I'm successful I'll be murderous!

FEYDAK [*genially*]. More power to you! But I've never seen it happen yet. Success is the great muffler! Not an epigram I hope. If it is—forgive me. [*A moment's pause*. KURT *studies him while FEYDAK crosses to stove and warms his hands*.]

KURT. I know you from somewhere. It's very tantalizing.

FEYDAK. I don't think so. I have only just arrived in this country. . . .

KURT. Still I know you—I'm sure—I've seen you somewhere. . . .

FEYDAK [*understanding the familiarity*]. Maybe you know Miss Froude's portrait of me. . . .

KURT [*doubtfully*]. Yes—maybe that's it . . . may I ask . . . ?

FEYDAK. Certainly. My name is Feydak.

## Twentieth Century Blues

KURT. The composer?

FEYDAK [*drily*]. Yes. . . .

KURT. I thought he was dead. . . .

FEYDAK. That is true. But I hope you won't tell anyone—for I am his ghost. . . .

KURT [*putting this down for Continental humor and genuinely contrite*]. Forgive me. . . .

FEYDAK. But why?

KURT. If you really are Feydak the composer—I have the most enormous admiration for you. I worship music above everything.

FEYDAK. [*slightly bored*]. Go on. . . .

KURT. I read in the paper—you're on your way to Hollywood. . . .

FEYDAK. Yes. I am on my way to Hollywood. . . .

KURT. In the new state men like you won't have to prostitute themselves in Hollywood. . . .

FEYDAK. Ah! A Utopian!

KURT. Yes. You use the word as a term of contempt. Why? Every artist is a Utopian. You must be very tired or you wouldn't be so contemptuous of Utopians.

FEYDAK [*with a charming smile*]. I am rather tired. Old-world you would call it.

KURT. You can be anything you like. . . .

FEYDAK [*satirically*]. Thank you. . . .

KURT. You've written lovely music—I have a friend who plays every note of it. I didn't see your operetta when it was done here. . . . I didn't have the price. . . . it was very badly done though, I heard. . . .

FEYDAK. I must explain to you—you are under a misapprehension. . . .

KURT. It was done here, wasn't it?

FEYDAK. Not about the operetta. You are under a misapprehension—about me. I am a composer—but I didn't write "Danubia." That was my brother, Victor Feydak. You are right. He is dead. You

are the first person I have met in New York who even suspected it.

KURT. I'm sorry.

FEYDAK. Not at all. I am flattered. At home our identities were never confused. Is this the well-known American hospitality? It is, in some sort, compensation for his death. . . . [KURT *is embarrassed and uncomfortable. It is part of his essential insecurity; he is only really at home in protest. He wants to get out.*]

KURT. I'm sorry—I. . . .

FEYDAK [*easily*]. But why?

KURT. I think I'll leave a note for Miss Froude—get that girl in here, will you?

FEYDAK. Let's have some tea—she's sure to be in any minute. . . .

KURT. No, thanks. And you might tell her for me that if she wants to see me about the matter I wrote her about she can come to my office. . . . [MARION FROUDE *comes in. She is one of those women, the sight of whom on Fifth Avenue where she has just been walking, causes foreigners to exclaim enthusiastically that American women are the most radiant in the world. She is tall, lithe, indomitably alive. Unlike KURT, the tears in things have warmed without scalding her; she floats life like a dancer's scarf in perpetual enjoyment of its colors and contours.*]

MARION [*to KURT*]. I'm so sorry!

FEYDAK [*coming toward her*]. I don't believe a word of it! [She *is overjoyed at seeing FEYDAK. She can't believe for a second that it is he. Then she flies into his arms.*]

MARION. Feydie! Oh, Feydie, I've been trying everywhere to reach you—I can't believe it. . . . Feydie darling!

FEYDAK [*severely*]. Is this how you keep a business appointment, Miss Froude?

MARION. How long have you waited? If

## Biography

I'd only known. . . . [Suddenly conscious that KURT had waited too.] Oh, I'm so sorry, Mr. — Mr. — . . . ?

KURT. Kurt. Richard Kurt.

MARION. Oh, of course, Mr. Kurt. I say—could you possibly—would it be too much trouble—could you come back?

FEYDAK [same tone]. This young man is here on business. It is more important. I can wait. I'll come back.

MARION. No, no, Feydie—no, no. I can't wait for that. I'm sure Mr. Kurt will understand. Mr. Feydak is an old friend whom I haven't seen in ever so long. It isn't as if Mr. Kurt were a regular businessman. . . .

FEYDAK [amused]. How do you know he isn't?

MARION [breathless with excitement]. I can tell. He's not a bit like his letter. When I got your letter I was sure you were jowley and you know—[She makes a gesture.] convex. I'm sure, Feydie—whatever the business is—[To KURT] you did say you had some, didn't you?—I'm sure it can wait. A half hour anyway. Can't it wait a half hour? You see Feydie and I haven't seen each other since. . . .

KURT. Vienna!

MARION [astonished]. Yes. How did you know?

KURT. It's always since Vienna that Bohemians haven't seen each other, isn't it? I'll be back in thirty minutes. [He goes.]

MARION. What a singular young man!

FEYDAK. I've been having a very amusing talk with him. Professional rebel, I think. Well, my dear—you look marvelous! [They take each other in.]

MARION. Isn't it wonderful. . . .

FEYDAK. It is nice! [They sit on sofa, MARION left of FEYDAK.]

MARION. How long is it?

FEYDAK. Well, it's since. . . .

MARION [firmly]. Since Vicki died.

FEYDAK. That's right. I haven't seen you since.

MARION. Since that day—we walked behind him.

FEYDAK. Yes.

MARION. I felt I couldn't bear to stay on. I left for London that night.

FEYDAK. Yes.

MARION. It's six years, isn't it?

FEYDAK. Yes. Six years last June. [A pause.]

MARION. What's happened since then? Nothing. . . .

FEYDAK. How long have you been here?

MARION. Two weeks.

FEYDAK. Busy?

MARION. Not professionally, I'm afraid. People are charming—they ask me to lunch and dinner and they're—"oh, so interested"—but no commissions so far. And God, how I need it. . . .

FEYDAK. I'm surprised. I gathered you'd been very successful.

MARION. It's always sounded like it, hasn't it? The impression, I believe, is due to the extreme notoriety of some of my sitters. Oh, I've managed well enough up to now—if I'd been more provident I dare say I could have put a tidy bit by—but at the moment people don't seem in a mood to have their portraits done. Are they less vain than they used to be? Or just poorer?

FEYDAK. Both, I think. . . .

MARION. Last time I came here I was awfully busy. Had great *réclame* because I'd been in Russia doing leading Communists. Obeying some subtle paradox the big financiers flocked to me. Pittsburgh manufacturers wanted to be done by the same brush that had tackled Lenin. Now they seem less eager. Must be some reason, Feydie. But what about you? Let me hear about you. How's Kathie?

## Twentieth Century Blues

FEYDAK. Well. She's here with me.

MARION. And Sadye?

FEYDAK. Splendid.

MARION. She must be a big girl now.

FEYDAK. As tall as you are.

MARION. Kathie used to hate me, didn't she? Frightened to death of me. Was afraid I was after Vicki's money. . . .

FEYDAK. Yes. She was afraid you'd marry him and that we should have less from him. When we knew he was dying she was in a panic.

MARION. Poor dear—I could have spared her all that worry if she'd been half-way civil to me.

FEYDAK. Kathie is practical. And she is a good mother. Those are attributes which make women avaricious. . . .

MARION. Did Vicki leave you very much?

FEYDAK. Not very much. Half to you.

MARION. Really? How sweet of him! How dear of him!

FEYDAK. We've spent it. . . .

MARION. Of course you should.

FEYDAK. But I'll soon be in position to repay you your share. I'm on my way to Hollywood.

MARION. Are you really? How wonderful for you, Feydie! I'm so glad. . . .

FEYDAK. You've been there, haven't you?

MARION. Yes. Last time I was in America.

FEYDAK. Did you like it?

MARION. Well, it's the new Eldorado—art on the gold-rush.

FEYDAK [*with a kind of ironic bitterness*]. Vicki left me an inheritance subject, it appears, to perpetual renewal.

MARION. How do you mean?

FEYDAK. Things have been going from bad to worse in Vienna—you haven't been there since '25 so you don't know. The theater's pretty well dead—even the first-

rate fellows have had a hard time making their way. I managed to get several scores to do—but they were not—except that they were failures—up to my usual standard. . . .

MARION [*laughing, reproachful*]. Oh, Feydie. . . .!

FEYDAK. If it weren't for the money Vicki left me—and you!—I don't know how we should have got through at all these six years. About a month ago we reached the end of our rope—we were hopelessly in debt—no means of getting out—when the miracle happened. . . . [MARION *is excited, touches his knee with her hand.*]

MARION [*murmuring*]. I can't bear it. . . .

FEYDAK. It was my dramatic agent on the phone. A great American film magnate was in town and wanted to see me. Ausgerechnet me and no other. Even my agent couldn't keep the surprise out of his voice. "Why me?" I asked. "God knows," says the agent. Well, we went around to the Bristol to see the magnate. And, as we talked to him, it gradually became apparent. He thought I was Vicki. He didn't know Vicki was dead! He thought I had written "Danubia."

MARION. Did he say so?

FEYDAK. No—not at all. But as we shook hands at the end he said to me: "Any man that can write a tune like this is the kind of man we want." And he whistled, so out of tune that I could hardly recognize it myself, the waltz from "Danubia." Do you remember it? [*He starts to hum the waltz and MARION joins him. They hum together, then FEYDAK continues to talk as MARION continues to hum a few more measures.*] He was so innocent, so affable that I had an impulse to say to him: "Look here, old fellow, you don't want me, you

## Biography

want my brother and, in order to get him, you'll have to resurrect him!" But noble impulses are luxury impulses. You have to be well off to gratify them. I kept quiet. We shook hands and here I am. Tonight they're giving me a dinner at the Waldorf Astoria for the press to meet my brother! Irony if you like, eh, Marion? [*There is a pause.*]

MARION. Feydie . . . [*A moment. He does not answer.*] Feydie—do you mind if I say something to you—very frankly?

FEYDAK. I doubt whether you can say anything to me more penetrating than the remarks I habitually address to myself.

MARION. You know Vicki was very fond of you. He used to say you put too high a valuation on genius.

FEYDAK. Because he had it he could afford to deprecate it. /

MARION. Over and over again he used to say to me: "You know, Marion," he would say, "as a human being Feydie's far superior to me, more amiable, more witty, more talented, more patient. . . ."

FEYDAK [*shakes his head*]. Not true. I simply give the impression of these things. . . .

MARION. You under-rate yourself, Feydie. . . . How this would have amused him—this incident with the Hollywood man!

FEYDAK [*smiling bitterly*]. It would rather. . . .

MARION. Why do you grudge him a laugh somewhere? I never had a chance to tell you in Vienna—things were so—so close and terrible—at the end—but he had the greatest tenderness for you. He used to speak of you—I can't tell you how much. "Because of this sixth sense for making tunes which I have and he hasn't," he said to me one day—not a week before he died—"he thinks himself

less than me." He used to tell me that everything he had he owed to you—to the sacrifices you made to send him to the Conservatory when he was a boy. . . . The extent to which he had outstripped you hurt him—hurt him. I felt he would have given anything to dip into the golden bowl of his genius and pour it over you. And do you know what was the terror of his life, the obsessing terror of his life—his fear of your resenting him. . . .

FEYDAK [*moved, deeply ashamed*]. Marion. . . .

MARION. Don't resent him now, Feydie. . . . Why, it's such fun—don't you see? It's such a curious, marginal survival for him—that a badly remembered waltz-tune, five years after his death, should be the means of helping you at a moment when you need it so badly. . . . It's delicious, Feydie. It's such fun! The only awful thing is the possibility that he is unaware of it. It would have pleased him so, Feydie. Must you grudge him it?

FEYDAK. You make me horribly ashamed.

MARION [*brightly*]. Nonsense. . . .

FEYDAK. Because I did grudge him it—yes—I won't, though—I see now that it never occurred to me how . . . [*Bursts out laughing suddenly.*] God, it is funny, isn't it. . . .

MARION [*joining in his laughter*]. Of course—it's delightful. . . . [*They both laugh heartily and long.*] And the funny thing is—you'll be much better for them out there than he would have been.

FEYDAK. Surely! They'll be able to whistle *my* tunes!

MARION. Don't you see!

FEYDAK. Oh, Lieber Schatzel, come out there with me.

MARION. Can't!

FEYDAK. I wish, Marion, you would

## Twentieth Century Blues

come. I never feel life so warm and good as when you are in the neighborhood.

MARION. Dear Feydie, you're very comforting.

FEYDAK. Is there someone that keeps you here?

MARION. No, there's no one. I'm quite alone.

FEYDAK. Well then . . . !

MARION. No, this isn't the moment for me, Feydie. Besides, I can't afford the journey. I'm frightfully hard up at the moment.

FEYDAK. Well, look here, I . . .

MARION. No, that's sweet of you but I couldn't.

FEYDAK. I don't see why—it's too silly. . . .

MARION. Vanity. A kind of vanity.

FEYDAK. But I owe it to you!

MARION. I suppose it is foolish in a way—but I've a kind of pride in maneuvering on my own. I always have done it—in that way at least I've been genuinely independent. I'm a little proud of my ingenuity. And do you know, Feydie, no matter how hard up I've been at different times something's always turned up for me. I have a kind of curiosity to know what it will be this time. It would spoil the fun for me to take money from my friends. Nothing—so much as that would make me doubtful of my own—shall we say—marketability?

FEYDAK. Paradoxical, isn't it?

MARION. Why not? Anyway it's a pet idée fixe of mine, so be a darling and let me indulge it, will you, Feydie, and don't offer me money. Anyway, I've a business proposition on. . . .

FEYDAK. Have you?

MARION. That young man who was just here. Do you suppose he'll come back? Now I think of it we were a bit short with

him, weren't we? I was so glad to see you I couldn't be bothered with him! [*Sound of doorbell.*] Ah! You see! [*Calls outside.*] Show him in, Minnie! [*MINNIE comes in and exits hall-door to admit the visitor.*]

FEYDAK. What are you doing for dinner?

MARION. There's a young man who attached himself to me on the boat. . . .

FEYDAK. Oh, Marion!

MARION. I seem to attract youth, Feydie. What shall I do about it?

FEYDAK. Where are you dining?

MARION. I don't know. . . . Which speakeasy? Tell me which one and I'll . . . [*MINNIE ushers in MR. LEANDER NOLAN. He is middle-aged, ample, handsome. Looks like the late Warren Gamaliel Harding. Soberly dressed and wears a waistcoat with white piping on it. The façade is impeccable but in NOLAN's eye you may discern, at odd moments, an uncertainty, an almost boyish anxiety to please, to be right, that is rather engaging. MARION, who expected the young man, is rather startled. MR. NOLAN regards her with satisfaction.*]

NOLAN. Hello, Marion.

MARION [*doubtfully, feels she should remember him*]. How do you do? Er—will you excuse me—just a second . . . ?

NOLAN [*genially*]. Certainly. [*He moves right. MARION walks FEYDIE to the hall-door.*]

FEYDAK [*under his breath to her*]. Looks like a commission. . . . [*She makes a gesture of silent prayer.*]

MARION [*out loud*]. Telephone me in an hour, will you, Feydie, and let me know which speakeasy. . . .

FEYDAK [*once he has her in the hall-way out of NOLAN's hearing*]. Also, du kommst ganz sicher?

MARION. Vielleicht später. 'Bye, Feydie

## Biography

dear. [FREDIE goes out. MARION turns to face NOLAN who is standing with his arms behind his back rather enjoying the surprise he is about to give her.]

NOLAN. How are you, Marion?

MARION [*delicately*]. Er—do I know you?

NOLAN. Yes. You know me.

MARION. Oh, yes—of course!

NOLAN. About time!

MARION [*brightly insecure*]. Lady Winchester's garden-party at Ascot—two summers ago. . . .

NOLAN. Guess again!

MARION. No—I know you perfectly well—it's just that—no, don't tell me. . . . [*She covers her eyes with her hand, trying to conjure him out of the past.*]

NOLAN. This is astonishing. If someone had said to me that I could walk into a room in front of Marion Froude and she not know me I'd have told 'em they were crazy. . . . !

MARION [*desperate*]. I do know you. I know you perfectly well—it's just that. . . .

NOLAN. You'll be awful sore at yourself—I warn you. . . .

MARION. I can't forgive myself now—I know!

NOLAN. I don't believe it!

MARION. The American Embassy dinner in Rome on the Fourth of July—last year—you sat on my right. . . .

NOLAN. I did not!

MARION [*miserably*]. Well, you sat somewhere. Where did you sit?

NOLAN. I wasn't there.

MARION. Well, I think it's very unkind of you to keep me in suspense like this. I can't bear it another second!

NOLAN. I wouldn't have believed it!

MARION. Well, give me some hint, will you?

NOLAN. Think of home—think of Tennessee!

MARION. Oh. . . . !

NOLAN. Little Mary Froude. . . .

MARION [*a light breaking in on her*]. No! Oh, no!

NOLAN. Well, it's about time. . . .

MARION. But. . . . ! You were. . . .

NOLAN. Well, so were you!

MARION. But—Bunny—you aren't Bunny Nolan, are you? You're his brother!

NOLAN. I have no brother.

MARION. But Bunny—Bunny dear—how important you've become!

NOLAN. I haven't done badly—no. . . .

MARION. Here, give me your coat and hat—[MARION, taking his coat and hat, crosses up-stage to piano, and leaves them there. Laughing, a little hysterical.] You should have warned me. It's not fair of you. Bunny! Of all people—I can scarcely believe it. . . . [*A moment's pause. He doesn't quite like her calling him Bunny but he doesn't know how to stop it. She sits on model-stand looking up at him as she says.*] You look wonderful. You look like a—like a—Senator or something monumental like that.

NOLAN [*sits on sofa below piano*]. That's a good omen. I'll have to tell Orrin.

MARION. What's a good omen? And who is Orrin?

NOLAN. Your saying I look like a Senator. Because—I don't want to be premature—but in a few months I may be one.

MARION. A Senator!

NOLAN [*smiling*]. Senator. Washington. Not Nashville.

MARION. Do you want to be a Senator or can't you help it?

NOLAN [*to whom this point of view is incomprehensible*]. What do you mean?

MARION. I'll paint you, Bunny. Toga. Ferrule. Tribune of the people.



## Twentieth Century Blues

NOLAN. Not a bad idea. Not a bad idea at all. I remember now—you were always sketching me. Sketching everything. Say, you've done pretty well yourself, haven't you?

MARION. Not as well as you have, Bunny. Imagine. Bunny Nolan—a Senator at Washington. Well, well! And tell me—how do I seem to you? You knew me at once, didn't you?

NOLAN. Sure I did. You haven't changed so much—a little perhaps. . . .

MARION [*delicately*]. Ampler?

NOLAN [*inspecting her*]. No . . . not that I can notice. . . .

MARION [*with a sigh of relief*]. That's wonderful. . . .

NOLAN. You look just the same. You are just the same.

MARION. Oh, you don't know, Bunny. I'm artful. How long is it since we've seen each other? Twelve years anyway. More than that—fifteen . . .

NOLAN. Just about—hadn't even begun to practice law yet. . . .

MARION. We were just kids . . . children. . . . And now look at you! I can see how successful you are, Bunny.

NOLAN. How?

MARION. White piping on your vest. That suggests directorates to me. Multiple control. Vertical corporations. Are you vertical or horizontal, Bunny?

NOLAN. I'm both.

MARION. Good for you! Married?

NOLAN. Not yet . . .

MARION. How did you escape? You're going to be, though.

NOLAN. I'm engaged.

MARION. Who's the lucky girl?

NOLAN. Slade Kinnicott. Daughter of Orrin Kinnicott.

MARION. Orrin Kinnicott. The newspaper publisher?

NOLAN. Yes. He's backing me for the Senate.

MARION. Well, if he's backing you you ought to get in. All that circulation—not very good circulation, is it? Still, one vote's as good as another, I suppose. . . .

NOLAN [*hurt*]. In my own State the Kinnicott papers are as good as any. . . .

MARION. Well, I wish you luck. I'm sure you'll have it. My! Senator Nolan!

NOLAN. If I get in I'll be the youngest Senator . . .

MARION. And the best-looking too, Bunny . . .

NOLAN [*embarrassed*]. Well . . .

MARION. You're fussed! How charming of you! [*She sits beside him.*] Oh, Bunny, I'm very proud of you, really.

NOLAN. You see, Marion, I've been pretty successful in the law. Tremendously successful I may say. I've organized some of the biggest mergers of recent years. I've made a fortune—a sizeable fortune. Well, one day I woke up and I said to myself: Look here, Nolan, you've got to take stock. You've got to ask yourself where you're heading. I'd been so busy I'd never had a chance to ask myself these fundamental questions before. And I decided to call a halt. You've got enough, more than enough for life, I said to myself. It's time you quit piling up money for yourself and began thinking about your fellow-man. I've always been ambitious, Marion. You know that. You shared all my early dreams . . .

MARION. Of course I did. . . .

NOLAN. Remember I always told you I didn't want money and power for their own sakes—I always wanted to be a big man in a real sense—to do something for my country and my time . . .

MARION. Yes. Sometimes you sounded

## Biography

like Daniel Webster, darling. I'm not a bit surprised you're going in the Senate.

NOLAN. I never thought—even in my wildest dreams . . .

MARION. Well, you see you under-estimated yourself. You may go even higher—the White House—why not?

NOLAN. I never let myself think of that.

MARION. Why not? It's no more wonderful than what's happened already, is it?

NOLAN [*Napoleon at Saint Helena*]. Destiny!

MARION. Exactly. Destiny!

NOLAN [*kind, richly human, patronizing*]. And you, my dear . . .?

MARION. As you see. Obscure. Uncertain. Alone. Nowhere at all. Not the remotest chance of my getting into the Senate—unless I marry into it. Oh, Bunny, after you get to Washington will you introduce me to some Senators?

NOLAN. Well, that's premature . . . Naturally if the people should favor me I'd do what I could. I never forget a friend. Whatever faults I may have, disloyalty, I hope, is not one of them.

MARION. Of course it isn't. You're a dear. You always were. [*A moment's pause.*]

NOLAN. Who was that fellow I found you with when I came in?

MARION. An old friend of mine from Vienna—a composer.

NOLAN. You've been a lot with foreigners, haven't you?

MARION. A good deal . . .

NOLAN. Funny, I don't understand that.

MARION. Foreigners are people, you know, Bunny. Some of 'em are rather nice.

NOLAN. When I'm abroad a few weeks home begins to look pretty good to me.

MARION. I love New York but I can't say I feel an acute nostalgia for Tennessee. [*Another pause. He stares at her suddenly—still incredulous that he should be seeing*

*her at all, and that, after all these years and quite without him, she should be radiant still.*]

NOLAN. Little Marion Froude! I can't believe it somehow. . . .

MARION. Oh, 'Bunny! You're sweet! You're so—ingenuous. That's what I always liked about you.

NOLAN. What do you mean?

MARION. The way you look at me, the incredulity, the surprise. What did you expect to see? A hulk, a remnant, a whitened sepulchre . . . what?

NOLAN [*uncomfortable at being caught*]. Not—not at all. . . .

MARION. Tell me, Bunny, what . . . ? I won't be hurt . . .

NOLAN [*miserably, stumbling*]. Well, naturally, after what I'd heard . . .

MARION. What have you heard? Oh, do tell me, Bunny.

NOLAN. Well, I mean—about your life. . . .

MARION. Racy, Bunny? Racy?

NOLAN. No use going into that. You chose your own way. Everybody has a right to live their own life I guess.

MARION [*pats his arm*]. That's very handsome of you, Bunny. I hope you take that liberal point of view when you reach the Senate.

NOLAN. I came here, Marion, in a perfectly sincere mood to say something to you, something that's been on my mind ever since we parted but if you're going to be flippant I suppose there's no use my saying anything—I might as well go, in fact. [*But he makes no attempt to do so.*]

MARION [*seriously*]. Do forgive me, Bunny. One gets into an idiom that passes for banter but really I'm not so changed. I'm not flippant. I'm awfully glad to see you, Bunny. [*An undertone of sadness creeps into her voice.*] After all, one makes

## Twentieth Century Blues

very few real friends in life—and you are part of my youth—we are part of each other's youth . . .

NOLAN. You didn't even know me!

MARION. Complete surprise! After all I've been in New York many times during these years and never once—never once have you come near me. You've dropped me all these years. [*With a sigh.*] I'm afraid, Bunny, your career has been too much with you.

NOLAN [*grimly*]. So has yours!

MARION. I detect an overtone—faint but unmistakable—of moral censure.

NOLAN [*same tone*]. Well, I suppose it's impossible to live one's life in art without being sexually promiscuous! [*He looks at her accusingly.*]

MARION. Oh, dear me, Bunny! What shall I do? Shall I blush? Shall I hang my head in shame? What shall I do? How does one react in the face of an appalling accusation of this sort? I didn't know the news had got around so widely . . .

NOLAN. Well, so many of your lovers have been famous men. . . .

MARION. Well, you were obscure . . . But you're famous now, aren't you? I seem to be stimulating if nothing else . . .

NOLAN. If I had then some of the fame I have now you probably wouldn't have walked out on me at the last minute the way you did . . .

MARION. Dear, dear Bunny, that's not quite—

NOLAN [*irritated beyond control*]. I wish you wouldn't call me Bunny. . . .

MARION. Well, I always did. What is your real name?

NOLAN. You know perfectly well . . .

MARION. I swear I don't. . . .

NOLAN. My name is Leander. . . .

MARION. Bunny, really. . . .

NOLAN. That is my name.

MARION. Really I'd forgotten that. Leander! Who was he—he did something in the Hellespont, didn't he? What did he do in the Hellespont?

NOLAN [*sharply*]. Beside the point. . . .

MARION. Sorry! You say you wanted to tell me something—

NOLAN [*grimly*]. Yes!

MARION. I love to be told things.

NOLAN. That night you left me—

MARION. We'd quarrelled about something, hadn't we?

NOLAN. I realized after you left me how much I'd grown to depend on you—

MARION. Dear Bunny!

NOLAN. I plunged into work. I worked fiercely to forget you. I did forget you— [*He looks away from her.*] And yet—

MARION. And yet—?

NOLAN. The way we'd separated and I never heard from you—it left something bitter in my mind—something— [*He hesitates for a word.*]

MARION [*supplying it*]. Unresolved?

NOLAN [*quickly—relieved that she understands so exactly*]. Yes. All these years I've wanted to see you, to get it off my mind—

MARION. Did you want the last word, Bunny dear?

NOLAN [*fiercely*]. I wanted to see you, to stand before you, to tell myself—"Here she is and—and what of it!"

MARION. Well, can you?

NOLAN [*heatedly, with transparent over-emphasis*]. Yes! Yes!

MARION. Good for you, Bunny. I know just how you feel—like having a tooth out, isn't it? [*Sincerely.*] In justice to myself—I must tell you this—that the reason I walked out on you in the summary way I did was not as you've just suggested because I doubted your future—it was obvious to me, even then, that you were des-

## Biography

trained for mighty things—but the reason was that I felt a disparity in our characters not conducive to matrimonial contentment. You see how right I was. I suspected in myself a—a tendency to explore, a spiritual and physical wanderlust—that I knew would horrify you once you found it out. It horrifies you now when we are no longer anything to each other. Imagine, Leander dear, if we were married how much more difficult it would be—If there is any one thing you have to be grateful to me for it is that instant's clear vision I had which made me see, which made me look ahead, which made me tear myself away from you. Why, everything you have now—your future, your prospects,—even your fiancée, Leander dear—you owe to me—no, I won't say to me—to that instinct—to that premonition. . . .

NOLAN [*nostalgic*]. We might have done it together. . . .

MARION. I wouldn't have stood for a fiancée, Bunny dear—not even I am as promiscuous as that. . . .

NOLAN. Don't use that word!

MARION. But, Leander! It's your own!

NOLAN. Do you think it hasn't been on my conscience ever since, do you think it hasn't tortured me . . . !

MARION. What, dear?

NOLAN. That thought!

MARION. Which thought?

NOLAN. Every time I heard about you—all the notoriety that's attended you in the American papers . . . painting pictures of Communist statesmen, running around California with movie comedians!

MARION. I have to practice my profession, Bunny. One must live, you know. Besides, I've done Capitalist statesmen too. And at Geneva. . . .

NOLAN [*darkly*]. You know what I mean . . . !

MARION. You mean . . . [*She whispers through her cupped hand.*] you mean promiscuous? Has that gotten around, Bunny? Is it whispered in the sewing-circles of Nashville? Will I be burned for a witch if I go back home? Will they have a trial over me? Will you defend me?

NOLAN [*quite literally, with sincere and disarming simplicity*]. I should be forced, as an honest man, to stand before the multitude and say: In condemning this woman you are condemning me who am asking your suffrages to represent you. For it was I with whom this woman first sinned before God. As an honorable man that is what I should have to do.

MARION. And has this worried you—actually . . . !

NOLAN. It's tortured me . . . !

MARION. You're the holy man and I'm Thaïs! That gives me an idea for the portrait which I hope you will commission me to do. I'll do you in a hair-shirt. Savonarola. He was a Senator too, wasn't he? Or was he?

NOLAN [*gloomily contemplating her*]. I can't forget that it was I who . . .

MARION. Did you think you were the first, Bunny? Was I so unscrupulously coquettish as to lead you to believe that I—oh, I couldn't have been. It's not like me. [*She crosses to right of model-stand.*]

NOLAN [*fiercely*]. Don't lie to me!

MARION [*sitting on stand*]. Bunny, you frighten me!

NOLAN [*stands over her almost threateningly*]. You're lying to me to salve my conscience but I won't have it! I know my guilt and I'm going to bear it!

MARION. Well, I don't want to deprive you of your little pleasures but . . .

NOLAN. You're evil, Marion. You haven't the face of evil but you're evil—evil!

## Twentieth Century Blues

MARION. Oh, Bunny darling, now you can't mean that surely. What's come over you? You never were like that—or were you? You know perfectly well I'm not evil. Casual—maybe—but not evil. Good Heavens, Bunny, I might as well say you're evil because you're intolerant. These are differences in temperament, that's all—charming differences in temperament.

NOLAN [*shakes his head, unconvinced*]. Sophistry!

MARION. All right, Dean Inge. Sophistry. By the way I've met the Gloomy Dean and he's not gloomy at all—he's very jolly. [*Gets up from stand.*] Let's have a cup of tea, shall we? Will your constituents care if you have a cup of tea with a promiscuous woman? Will they have to know?

NOLAN. I'm afraid I can't, Marion. I have to be getting on. . . .

MARION. Oh, stay and have some tea—[*Makes him sit down.*] what do you have to do that can't wait for a cup of tea? . . . [*Calls off.*] Minnie—Minnie. . . .

MINNIE [*appears in doorway*]. Ja, Fräulein. . . .

MARION. Bitte—tee. . . .

MINNIE. Ja, Fräulein. . . . [*She goes out. MARION smiles at NOLAN and sits beside him. He is quite uncomfortable.*]

NOLAN [*slightly embarrassed*]. About the painting, Marion. . . .

MARION. Oh, I was only joking . . . don't let yourself be bullied into it . . .

NOLAN. I've never been painted in oils. It might do for campaign purposes. And, if I should be elected, it would be very helpful to you in Washington.

MARION. You're awfully kind, Bunny. I must tell you frankly though that the dignified Senatorial style isn't exactly my forte. However, I might try. Yes—I'll try . . . [*She gives him a long look.*] I'll go the limit on you, Bunny—when I

get through with you you'll be a symbol of Dignity. Solid man. No nonsense. Safe and sane. Holds the middle course—a slogan in a frock-coat. I'll make you look like Warren G. Harding—even handsomer—Get you the women's votes.

NOLAN. Well, that'll be very nice of you. . . . [*MARION suddenly kisses him.*]

MARION. Thank you, darling! [*He is very uncomfortable, embarrassed and thrilled.*]

NOLAN. Marion . . . !

MARION. Just a rush of feeling, dear! .

NOLAN. You understand that this—this commission . . .

MARION. Of course. Strictly business. Don't worry. I shan't kiss you again till it's finished.

NOLAN. I don't know whether I told you—I'm going to be married in a month.

MARION. I'll have the portrait ready for your wedding-day.

NOLAN. And I am devoted to Slade with every fibre of my being. . . .

MARION. Every fibre—how thorough!

NOLAN. I'm not a Bohemian, you know, Marion.

MARION. Don't tell me! You're a gypsy! [*She continues to study him, poses him, poses his hand. MINNIE enters from left with tea-tray containing tea-pot, cups and saucers, spoons, sugar and cream, and a plate of cakes. She puts tray on model-stand and exits left.*] Oh, Bunny, what fun it'll be to do you. Thank you, Minnie. Tell me—how do you see yourself?

NOLAN. What do you mean?

MARION. In your heart of hearts—how do you see yourself? Napoleon, Scipio, Mussolini . . . ?

NOLAN. Nonsense! Do you think I'm an actor?

MARION. Of course. Everybody is. Everybody has some secret vision of himself.

## Biography

Do you know what mine is? Do you know how I see myself? [*The doorbell rings.*]

NOLAN [*ironically*]. More visitors!

MARION [*calls to MINNIE*]. See who it is, will you, Minnie? . . . Probably the young man I met on the boat coming to take me to dinner.

NOLAN. What's his name?

MARION. I've forgotten. He's just a boy I met on the boat.

NOLAN. How can anybody live the way you live!

MARION. It's a special talent, dear. [*Doorbell rings again.*] Minnie, go to the door. [*MINNIE comes in and exits hall-way.*] This is my lucky day, Bunny.

NOLAN. Would you mind, in front of strangers, not to call me Bunny?

MARION. Oh, of course, what is it?

NOLAN [*irritated*]. Leander.

MARION [*mnemonic*]. Leander—Hellespont—Leander. . . . [*MINNIE comes down stage a few feet from the door.*]

MINNIE [*just inside the room*]. It's the Junge who was here before—er sagt er ist ausgeschifft da—

MARION. Oh, show him in, Minnie, and bring a cup for him too.

MINNIE [*as she goes*]. Ja.

NOLAN. And don't use these extravagant terms of endearment—anybody who didn't know you would misunderstand it. . . .

MARION [*very happy*]. All right, darling. [*MINNIE ushers in RICHARD KURT, goes out, comes back again with more tea. MARION comes forward to greet him.*] I'm so glad to see you again, Mr.—. . .

KURT. Kurt.

MARION. Oh. . . .

KURT. With a K.

MARION [*reassured*]. Oh—I'll try to re-

member. This is Senator Nolan—Mr. Kurt. . . .

NOLAN [*glowering*]. I am not Senator Nolan.

MARION. But you will be. [*She offers him a cup of tea; he takes it.*] Can't I just call you that—between ourselves? It gives me such a sense of quiet power. And maybe it'll impress my visitor. Do have a cup of tea, Mr. Kurt. [*She gives him one.*]

KURT [*puts his hat on sofa left*]. I am not impressed by politicians. And I didn't come to drink tea. I am here on business. [*Nevertheless he takes a hearty sip.*]

MARION. Well, you can do both. They do in England. American business-men are so tense.

KURT. I'm not a business-man.

NOLAN. Well, whatever you are, you are very ill-mannered.

KURT [*pleased*]. That's true!

MARION [*delighted*]. Isn't it nice you agree. For a moment I thought you weren't going to hit it off. . . .

NOLAN. In my day if a boy came in and behaved like this before a lady he'd be horsewhipped.

KURT. Well, when you get into the Senate you can introduce a horsewhipping bill. Probably bring you great kudos.

NOLAN. You talk like a Bolshevik.

KURT. Thank you! You talk like a Senator! [*MARION wants to laugh but thinks better of it. She looks at KURT with a new eye.*]

MARION [*quickly offering him more tea*]. Another cup, Mr. Kurt. . . .

KURT [*taking it*]. Thank you.

MARION. And one of these cakes—they're very nice . . . Minnie made them—almost as good as lebkuchen. Minnie spoils me.

KURT [*taking it*]. Thank you. [*Eats cake.*] Having said, from our respective

## Twentieth Century Blues

points of view, the worst thing we could say about each other, having uttered the ultimate insult, there's no reason we can't be friends, Senator. Damn good cake. No lunch as a matter of fact.

MARION. That's what's the matter with him—he was hungry—hungry boy. . . .

NOLAN [*puts tea-cup on piano*]. He probably wants to sell you some insurance. . . .

KURT. Not at all. I'm not here to sell. I'm here to buy.

MARION. A picture!

KURT. Do I look like a picture-buyer!

MARION. As a matter of fact you don't . . . but I haven't anything to sell except pictures.

KURT [*confidently*]. I think you have!

MARION [*to NOLAN*]. This young man is very tantalizing.

NOLAN. Well, why don't you ask him to state his proposition and have done with it?

MARION [*turns to KURT and repeats mechanically*]. State your proposition and have done with it.

KURT [*puts his cup down on table rear of sofa left*]. What a nuisance women are!

NOLAN [*starting toward him*]. Why, you insolent young whelp—I've half a mind to . . .

KURT [*pleasantly*]. That's an impulse you'd better control. I wrote to this lady a business letter asking for an appointment. She granted it to me at four o'clock. It is now six. In that interval I've climbed these five flights of stairs three times. I've lost over an hour of my life going away and coming back. An hour in which I might have read a first-class book or made love to a girl or had an idea—an irreparable hour. That's rudeness if you like. It's unbusinesslike. It's sloppy. [*To MARION*]. Now will you see me alone or will you

keep me here fencing with this inadequate antagonist?

MARION. You are unquestionably the most impossible young man I've ever met. Go away!

KURT. Right! [*He turns to go and means it and she knows that he means it. And she is consumed with curiosity. As he goes.*] So long, Senator—Yours for the Revolution.

MARION [*as he reaches door, goes after him—pleads pitifully*]. Young man! Mr. Nolan is an old friend of mine. I should consult him in any case about whatever business you may suggest. Can't you speak in front of him? [*At the same time she shakes her head to him not to go away.*]

KURT. I cannot!

MARION. Please wait a minute. . . .

KURT. All right—one. [*He picks up a magazine and leafs through it negligently.*]

MARION [*to LEANDER*]. After all, Leander, I can't afford—it may be something. . . . [*She takes his arm and starts walking him to the door, whispering.*] I'm just curious to hear what he's got to say for himself. . . .

NOLAN. I'm not sure it's safe to leave you alone with a character like that. . . .

MARION. Minnie's in her room . . . with a bow and arrow!

NOLAN [*going up to hall-door*]. I have to go in any case—I'm late now.

MARION. When will I see you, Bunny? [*She is at door with him.*]

NOLAN [*taking up his hat and coat*]. I don't know. I'm very busy. I'll telephone you.

MARION. Do. Telephone me tonight. I'll tell you what he said. It'll probably be funny.

NOLAN [*out loud at KURT*]. It pains me, Marion, that you are so unprotected that

## Biography

any hooligan—[KURT turns page of magazine] can write you and come to see you in your apartment. However, that is the way you have chosen. Good night.

MARION. Good night, dear. Are you in the book? I'll telephone you . . .

NOLAN [*hastily*]. No—no—you'd better not. I shall communicate with you. Good-by.

KURT. Good-by, Sir Galahad. [NOLAN starts to retort, changes his mind and, in a very choleric mood, he goes out. There is a pause.]

MARION. Well, I'm afraid you didn't make a very good impression on him!

KURT [*putting magazine away*]. That's just too bad!

MARION. That's no way for a young man to get on in the world—he's a very important person.

KURT. That's what passes for importance. You're not taken in by him, are you? Stuffed shirt—flatulent and pompous—perfect legislator!

MARION. As a matter of fact he's a very nice man—simple and kindly. [*Gets cigarettes and offers one to KURT who takes it and lights it. She takes one too but he forgets to light hers.*]

KURT. I bet he isn't simple and he isn't kindly. I bet he's greedy and vicious. Anyway he's a hypocrite. When a man starts worrying out loud about unprotected women you may know he's a hypocritical sensualist.

MARION. You're a violent young man, aren't you? [*Not getting light from KURT she lights her own. Throwing match to floor.*]

KURT. Yes. The world is full of things and people that make me see red. . . . Why do you keep calling me youth and young man? I'm twenty-five.

MARION. Well, you seem to have the

lurid and uncorrected imagination of the adolescent.

KURT. Imagination! That's where you're wrong. I may tell you, Miss Froude, that I'm as realistic as anybody you've ever met.

MARION [*sitting on up-stage arm of sofa, right*]. Anybody who'd be so unreasonable over a nice fellow like Bunny Nolan . . . if you only knew—if only you'd been present at the interview I had with him just before you came. You'd have seen how wrong you are about him. Why, he was—he was awfully funny—but he was also touching.

KURT. You're one of those tolerant people, aren't you—see the best in people?

MARION. You say that as if tolerance were a crime.

KURT. Your kind is. It's criminal because it encourages dishonesty, incompetence, weakness and all kinds of knavery. What you call tolerance I call sloppy laziness. You're like those book-reviewers who find something to praise in every mediocre book.

MARION. You are a fanatical young man.

KURT. Having said that you think you dispose of me. Well, so be it. I'm disposed of. Now, let's get down to business. [*His manner plainly says: "Well, why should I bother to convince you? What importance can it possibly have what you think of me?" It is not wasted on MARION.*]

MARION. You are also a little patronizing . . .

KURT [*pleased*]. Am I?

MARION. However, I don't mind being patronized. That's where my tolerance comes in. It even amuses me a little bit. [*Crossing to piano-seat.*] But as I have to change for dinner perhaps you'd better . . .

KURT. Exactly.



## Twentieth Century Blues

MARION. Please sit down . . . [*A moment . . . She sits on piano-bench facing him.*]

KURT [*goes to piano and talks to her across it*]. I am the editor of a magazine called Every Week. Do you know it?

MARION. It seems to me I've seen it on news-stands. . . .

KURT. You've never read it?

MARION. I'm afraid I haven't.

KURT. That is a tribute to your discrimination. We have an immense circulation. Three millions, I believe. With a circulation of that size you may imagine that the average of our readers' intelligence cannot be very high. Yet occasionally we flatter them by printing the highbrows—in discreet doses we give them, at intervals, Shaw and Wells and Chesterton. So you'll be in good company anyway. . . .

MARION [*amazed*]. I will?

KURT. Yes. I want you to write your biography to run serially in Every Week. Later of course you can bring it out as a book.

MARION. My biography!

KURT. Yes. The story of your life.

MARION [*with dignity*]. I know the meaning of the word.

KURT. The money is pretty good. I am prepared to give you an advance of two thousand dollars.

MARION. Good Heavens, am I as old as that—that people want my biography!

KURT. We proceed on the theory that nothing exciting happens to people after they are forty. . . .

MARION. What a cruel idea!

KURT. Why wait till you're eighty. Your impressions will be dimmed by time. Most autobiographies are written by corpses. Why not do yours while you are still young, vital, in the thick of life?

MARION. But I'm not a writer. I shouldn't know how to begin.

KURT. You were born, weren't you? Begin with that.

MARION. I write pleasant letters, my friends tell me. . . . But look here, why should you want this story from me—why should anybody be interested?—I'm not a first-rate artist you know—not by far—I'm just clever. . . .

KURT [*bluntly*]. It's not, you—it's the celebrity of your subjects. . . .

MARION [*amused*]. You're a brutal young man—I rather like you. . . .

KURT. Well, you've been courageous. You've been forthright. For an American woman you've had a rather extraordinary career—you've done pretty well what you wanted. . . .

MARION. The Woman Who Dared sort-of-thing. . . . Isn't that passé?

KURT. I think your life will make good copy. You might have stayed here and settled down and done Pictorial Review covers of mothers hovering fondly over babies. Instead you went to Europe and managed to get the most inaccessible people to sit for you. How did you do it?

MARION. You'd be surprised how accessible some of these inaccessible people are!

KURT. Well, that's just what I want to get from your story. Just that. Tell what happened to you, that's all. The impulse that made you leave home, that made you go, for instance, to Russia, before the popular emigration set in, that's made you wander ever since, that's kept you from settling down in any of the places where you had a chance to get established.

MARION [*quite seriously*]. But supposing I don't know that. . . .

KURT. Well, that's interesting. That enigma is interesting. Maybe, while writing, you can solve it. It's a form of clari-

## Biography

fiction. The more I talk to you the more I feel there's a great story in you and that you'll have great fun telling it.

MARION. Young man, you make me feel like an institution!

KURT. Should do you a lot of good in your professional career too—we'll reprint the portraits you've made of Lenin, Mussolini, Shaw—anything you like. . . . [*She begins to laugh, quietly at first, then heartily.*]

MARION. Forgive me. . . .

KURT [*unperturbed*]. What's the matter?

MARION. Something I remembered—the funniest thing—isn't it funny how the oddest things pop into your mind?

KURT. What was it?

MARION. Something that happened years ago. . . .

KURT. What?

MARION. Oh, I couldn't possibly tell you. It wouldn't be fair!

KURT. In that case it'll probably be great for the magazine. Save it!

MARION [*frightened*]. You won't do anything lurid, will you?

KURT. Just print the story—just as you write it—practically as you write it.

MARION. I'm scared! [*She puts out her cigarette in ash-tray on the piano.*]

KURT. Nonsense. Here's your first check. Two thousand dollars. [*He puts the check down on the table in front of her.*]

MARION [*wretched suddenly, picks up check, rises, looks at check*]. I can't tell you how old this makes me feel!

KURT. Suppose I asked you to write a novel! That wouldn't make you feel old, would it? Well, I'm simply asking you to write a novel of your life. The only lively reading these days is biography. People are bored with fiction. It's too tame. The

fiction-writers haven't the audacity to put down what actually happens to people.

MARION. You may be disappointed, you know. You probably see headlines in your mind. The Woman of a Hundred Affairs, The Last of the Great Adventuresses, The Magda Who Wouldn't Go Home. I promise you—it won't be a bit like that.

KURT. We'll announce it next month—first installment the following month. O.K.?

MARION [*puts down check, paces down right*]. Oh, dear! I can't promise a thing like that—I really can't. . . .

KURT. Why not?

MARION. It'll worry me too much.

KURT. Well, don't promise. Just get to work.

MARION [*faces him*]. But what'll I do first?

KURT [*getting up*]. Well, if I were you I'd sit down. [*She does so helplessly on piano-bench. KURT then gives her paper, one of his own pencils.*] There now! You're all set!

MARION [*wailing*]. How can I go out to dinner—how can I ever do anything—with a chapter to write?

KURT. After all you don't have to make up anything. Just tell what happened to you. [*He lights a fresh cigarette.*]

MARION. Can I use names?

KURT. When they're prominent, yes. The obscure ones you can fake if you want to. Nobody'll know 'em anyway.

MARION [*looks at him*]. Oh . . . what's your name?

KURT [*looks at her*]. I told you—my name's Kurt.

MARION. I know—with a K—I can't call you Kurt! What's your name?

KURT [*sulkily*]. Richard.

MARION. That's better. I tell you, Dickie, when I think—when I think—of the funny

## Twentieth Century Blues

men I've known . . . they're pretty nearly all brothers under the skin you know, Dickie.

KURT. Well, that, as they say in the office, is an angle. [*Suddenly her fear vanishes and she is overcome with the marvelous possibilities.*]

MARION [*jumps up and leans toward him as if to kiss him, but quickly thinks better of it*]. Dickie, I think it'll be marvelous! it'll be a knockout. And imagine—[*Picking up check*] I'm going to be paid for it! Dickie, you're an angel!

KURT [*sardonically*]. That's me! Angel. Kurt! Well, so long. I'll be seeing you. [*Starts up-stage toward hall-door.*]

MARION [*suddenly panicky*]. Oh, don't go!

KURT. You don't think I'm going to sit here and hold your hand while you're remembering your conquests, do you?

MARION. Well, you can't go away and leave me like this—alone with my life. . . .

KURT. Perhaps it's time you got a good, straight, clear-eyed look at it—alone by yourself, without anybody around to hold your hand. . . .

MARION [*suddenly*]. No. I don't want to. [*Shrugs her shoulders as if she were cold.*] I think it would worry me. Besides, I feel superstitious about it.

KURT [*following her down stage*]. Superstitious!

MARION. Yes. A kind of—ultimate act. After you've written your biography, what else could there possibly be left for you to do?

KURT. Collect material for another!

MARION. What could you do over again—that wouldn't be repetitious? [*Sits right arm of sofa right.*]

KURT. It's repetitious to eat or to make love, isn't it? You keep on doing it.

MARION. You're cynical!

KURT [*almost spits it out*]. You're sentimental.

MARION. I am—Sentimental Journey—no, that's been used, hasn't it?

KURT. Don't worry about a title—I'll get that from the story after you've finished it.

MARION. There's something about it—I don't know—

KURT. What?

MARION. Vulgar. *Everybody* spouting memoirs. Who cares?

KURT. Well, wrong hunch! Sorry to have taken your valuable time. Good-by.

MARION [*the finality frightens her*]. What do you mean?

KURT [*he is withering—crosses to her*]. I'm prepared to admit I was mistaken—that's all. In your desire to escape vulgarity you would probably be—thin. You might even achieve refinement. I'm not interested. Padded episodes hovering on the edge of amour—

MARION [*turns on him*]. Young man, you're insufferable!

KURT. And you're a false alarm!

MARION [*after a moment*]. I congratulate you! You've brought me to the verge of losing my temper! But I tell you this—you're quite mistaken about the character of my life—and about my relations with my friends. My story won't be thin and episodic because my life hasn't been thin and episodic. And I won't have to pad—the problem will be to select. I'm going to write the damn thing just to show you. Come in tomorrow afternoon for a cocktail.

KURT. Whose memoirs are these going to be, yours or mine?

MARION. Well, you're an editor, aren't you? [*She smiles at him.*] Come in and edit.

KURT. All right, I'll come. But if you

## Biography

aren't here I'll go away. I won't wait a minute. *[He goes out quickly. MARION stands looking after him, inclined to laugh, and yet affected. This is a new type even for her.]*

MARION *[she speaks to herself]*. What an extraordinary young man! *[In a moment KURT comes back in. MARION is very glad to see him, greets him as if there had been a long separation.]* Oh, hello!

KURT *[embarrassed]*. I forgot my hat! *[He can't see it at once.]*

MARION *[without moving nor looking away from him, she indicates the hat on the sofa left]*. There it is! Right next to mine.

KURT *[crosses for it]*. Oh, yes. *[Picks up the hat.]* Thanks. *[For a moment he stands uncertainly, hat in hand, looking at MARION who has not taken her eyes off him. He is embarrassed.]* Well, so long!

MARION. So long. *[KURT leaves again. She stands as before looking after him. She turns toward the piano—sees the check—picks it up and reads it to make sure it's true. The whole thing has a slightly fantastic quality to her. She is very happy and excited. She waves the check in her hand like a pennant and humming she crosses to the piano seat and sits and plays the waltz from "Danubia." She sees the pad and pencil on the piano and stops playing and picking up the pencil and the pad she crosses to the small arm-chair in the up-stage end of the window and sits with her feet on the window seat. She repeats the first words of the first chapter aloud to herself as she writes them down.]*

I am born . . . *[MINNIE enters from door left to get the tea things she had left on the model-stand. MARION taps the pencil on the pad as she repeats the words.]* I am born . . . *[The time seems remote to her.]* I am born—I meet Richard Kurt—Well, Minnie, here's the outline—I am born . . . I meet Richard Kurt—now all I have to do is to fill in. . . . *[MINNIE, used to having irrelevancies addressed to her, takes this program rather stolidly.]*

MINNIE. Was, Marion?

MARION *[trying to get rid of her]*. Fix something light, will you, Minnie . . . I'm not going out.

MINNIE. Aber der Junge kommt!

MARION. What Junge?

MINNIE. Der Junge dem sie . . .

MARION. Oh, yes! The Junge I met on the boat. You'll have to send him away. I can't go out tonight. From now on, Minnie, no more frivolous engagements!

MINNIE *[astonished]*. Sie bleiben ganzen abend zu Hause!

MARION. Yes, Minnie. I'm spending the evening alone with my life . . . *[She remembers KURT's words and repeats them as if, after all, they have made a profound impression on her.]* get a good, straight, clear-eyed look at it . . .

MINNIE *[picks up the tea tray and bustles toward the kitchen, promising delights]*. Ein fleisch brühe und pfannkuchen! . . . *[MINNIE exits door left.]*

MARION *[already brooding over her past]*. I am born. . . .

*[Slowly the curtain falls.]*

## ACT II

*[SCENE: The same. About three weeks later. Afternoon.]*

AT RISE: MARION is putting some

touches on the full length portrait of LEANDER NOLAN which stands away from the audience. She is wearing her working

## Twentieth Century Blues

costume, baggy red corduroy trousers, a sash and a worn blue smock over a kind of sweater-jacket. She is very happy. . . . On the piano nearby are her writing things. While touching up LEANDER she is struck by an idea for her book. Puts down her brush and palette and goes to the piano to jot down some notes. The idea pleases her. She giggles to herself. Then she returns to her easel. MINNIE comes in and stands watching her a moment before MARION sees her.]

MARION [sees MINNIE at last]. Oh, yes, Minnie—do you want anything?

MINNIE. You asked me to come right away, Marion.

MARION. Did I?

MINNIE. Ja. [Sitting on sofa right.] Zo! You have left a note on the kitchen I should come in right away I am back from the market.

MARION [studying the portrait]. Of course I did. That's right, Minnie.

MINNIE. Well, what did you want, Marion?

MARION [washing paint brush in turpentine jar]. Did I tell you there'd be two for dinner?

MINNIE. Ja. Gewiss! Das ist vy I vent to the market.

MARION. Well, I've changed my plans. I'm dining out with Feydie after all.

MINNIE [rising and looking at picture]. Ach, Gott! [She studies the portrait.]

MARION [looks humorously at MINNIE and puts her arm about MINNIE's shoulders]. Gut?

MINNIE. Ziemlich gut—

MARION. Do you know who it is?

MINNIE. Oh, das sieht man ja gleich. Das ist Herr Nolan!

MARION [shaking her hand in gratitude].

Thank you, Minnie! [Doorbell rings.] See who that is, will you, Minnie?

MINNIE. Fräulein ist zu Hause?

MARION. Ich erwarte Herr Feydak. Für ihn bin ich immer zu Hause.

MINNIE [agreeing heartily as she crosses to the door]. Ja, Ja, der Herr Feydak. . . . [MINNIE goes out. MARION jots down a note on the pad which is on the piano. FEYDAK enters. MINNIE closes the door and exits left.]

MARION [at piano]. Hello, Feydie! Sit down!

FEYDAK. Well, my dear, which career do I interrupt?

MARION [laughing]. I don't know!

FEYDAK. One comes to see you with diffidence nowadays. [FEYDAK removes coat and hat and places them on the up-stage end of the sofa right, and sits on the left side of the sofa.]

MARION. While I'm painting I think of funny things to say, funny phrases. It won't be a serious biography, thank God. I'm dedicating it to Vicki: "To Vicki—the gayest person I have ever known!" By the way, have you got any little snapshots of Vicki—all I've got are formal photographs with his orders. I'd like to get something a little more intimate.

FEYDAK. I'll hunt some up for you.

MARION. Have you heard from the Powers yet, when you are to leave?

FEYDAK. Tomorrow.

MARION [stricken—sits right of him]. Feydie!

FEYDAK [fatalistically]. Tomorrow. [They sit.] I shall leave you with sorrow, Marion.

MARION. I'll have no one to laugh with.

FEYDAK. For me it's an exile.

MARION. You'll have a wonderful time. I shall miss you terribly.

FEYDAK. Perhaps you'll come out.

## Biography

MARION. Perhaps I will. I've always wanted to go to China. If I have enough money left from all my labors I'll stop in on you—en route to China.

FEYDAK. That would be marvelous.

MARION. You know writing one's life has a sobering effect on one—you get it together and you think: "Well! look at the damn thing . . ."

FEYDAK. Do you want to be impressive?

MARION. Well, I don't want to be trivial . . .

FEYDAK. I think *you* escape that.

MARION. My friendships haven't been trivial. . . . [*She gives his hand a squeeze.*]

FEYDAK. Have you seen that bombastic young man?

MARION. Oh, yes. He comes in every once in a while to see how I'm getting on. He's quite insulting. Underneath his arrogance I suspect he's very uncertain.

FEYDAK. Oh, now, don't tell me he has an inferiority complex!

MARION. Well, I think he has!

FEYDAK. The new psychology is very confusing. In my simple day you said: "That young man is bumptious and insufferable" and you dismissed him. Now you say: "He has an inferiority complex" and you encourage him to be more bumptious and more insufferable. It's very confusing.

MARION. There's a kind of honesty about him that I like.

FEYDAK [*instantly putting two and two together*]. Oh!

MARION. Nothing like that, Feydie! As a matter of fact—I don't mind telling you . . . I like him very much—

FEYDAK. I think he is destined . . .

MARION. He's not interested. He's some kind of fanatic. Social, I think. I've met that kind in Russia—quite unassailable.

But I'm optimistic. . . . [*They laugh.*] Well, one must never despair, must one. Life is so much more resourceful and resilient than one is oneself. Three weeks ago when you came to see me I felt quite at the end of my rope. I didn't tell you quite but I actually didn't know which way to turn. I felt tired too—which troubled me. Well, now I find myself, quite suddenly [*She indicates portrait*] doing Leander and— [*She indicates manuscript on piano*] doing myself. New Vista. Very exciting.

FEYDAK. All this enthusiasm for art alone?

MARION [*laughing*]. Of course!—Feydie, what did you think? .

FEYDAK. I don't believe it.

MARION. Come here and have a look at Leander!

FEYDAK [*he rises—walks to the canvas on the easel*]. Hm! Formal!

MARION. It's to hang in the White House. [*She winks at him, he laughs, puts his arm around her shoulder.*]

FEYDAK. Marion, you're adorable! [*They walk down stage together, their arms around each other's shoulders, very affectionately.*]

MARION. Oh, Feydie, I'm having a wonderful time. Quiet too. Writing enforces silence and solitude on one. I've always lived in such a rush—a kind of interminable scherzo. . . .

FEYDAK. Good title! . . .

MARION. Think so? I'll put it down. . . . [*Writes on pad on piano. FEYDAK sits on right arm of sofa left facing her.*] Interminable scherzo. . . . How do you spell it? A little affected. Might do for a chapter heading maybe. . . . [*Returns to him—sitting on model-stand—facing him.*] But I realize now I haven't in years had time to stop and think. I sit here for hours,

## Twentieth Century Blues

Feydie, and nothing comes to me. Then, suddenly, the past will come in on me with such a rush—odd, remote, semi-forgotten things of the past. Are they true? How much is true? One can never be sure, can one? I remember certain griefs and fears. I remember their existence without recalling at all their intensity—their special anguish. Why? What was the matter with me? What made them so acute? It is like recalling a landscape without color, a kind of color-blindness of the memory. *[Doorbell rings. She calls out to her factotum.]* Minnie! *[MINNIE enters left and crosses rapidly to hall door. MARION arranges the model-stand on which stands the papal arm-chair in red and gold.]* This is probably the Hon. Nolan. He's due for a sitting. He pretends he doesn't like to have his picture painted, but I know he does. *[MINNIE enters from hall-way. She is flustered and giggly.]*

MINNIE *[very high-pitched voice]*. Herr Varvick Vilson!

MARION. Tympi Wilson!

MINNIE *[to FEYDAK]*. Der film star!

FEYDAK. So?

MINNIE *[radiant]*. Ja! Ja!

MARION. Oh, Feydie, you'll adore this. Ask him in, Minnie.

MINNIE *[as she goes out to admit WILSON]*. Gott, ist er schön!

MARION. Warwick's public.

FEYDAK. And mine!

MARION *[in a quick whisper]*. Whatever you do—outstay him! *[MINNIE has opened the door and WARWICK WILSON enters. He is very handsome, explosively emotional, and given to cosmic generalization. He is in evening clothes.]*

WILSON *[with a red carnation in his buttonhole, crossing to MARION and kissing her hand.]* Marion!

MARION. Warwick!

WILSON. Darling! How are you?

MARION. I'm splendid. Been up all night?

WILSON. No, no! This is business. *[MINNIE has crossed to kitchen door upper-left, never taking her eyes from WILSON.]*

MARION. This is Mr. Feydak. Mr. Warwick Wilson, the famous film star.

WILSON *[crosses to sofa and shakes hands with FEYDAK—dramatically]*. Feydak! The Mr. Feydak?

FEYDAK *[again mistaken for his brother]*. Ja.

WILSON. I've heard of you indeed!

FEYDAK. Have you? Thanks.

MARION. Mr. Feydak is on his way to Hollywood. He is to write the music for . . .

WILSON *[sits on the model-stand—facing front]*. Of course! I am honored, Mr. Feydak—deeply honored. That unforgettable waltz—how does it go? . . . *[He starts to hum with a swaying gesture the waltz from the "Merry Widow."]* Music's my one passion!

MARION. Once you said it was me.

WILSON. A lot of good it did me!

MARION *[to WILSON]*. Well, tell me . . . *[She sees MINNIE who is still staring at WILSON.]* Look at Minnie. The mere sight of you has upset her so that she's speechless.

MINNIE. Aber, Fräulein! *[WILSON rises gracefully and gives MINNIE a friendly wave of the hand. He's no snob. MINNIE, speechless with delight, exits left. WILSON returns to his position on the model-stand.]*

MARION. All right, Minnie! Warwick, Warwick! You mustn't do things like that to Minnie, at her age!

WILSON *[tragically]*. There you are!

## Biography

This face! This cursed face! I should go masked really. One has no private life!

MARION [*sits in throne chair on model-stand*]. What would you do with it if you had it, eh, Tympi?

WILSON [*delighted*]. That nickname!

MARION. It just rolled off my tongue. Did I call you that?

WILSON. You did! You invented it. No one's called me that since you left Hollywood. And you promised to explain the significance to me, but you never did.

MARION. Did it have a significance?

FEYDAK. Marion has a knack for nicknames.

MARION. I love 'em. I'd like to do a chapter on nicknames.

WILSON [*highly pleased*]. Tympi! Tympi! [*Very patronizing to FEYDAK.*] You are an intuitive person, Mr. Feydak. I can see that. [*FEYDAK ad libs: "Danke schön."*] Can you imagine what she meant?

FEYDAK. Her vagaries are beyond me, Mr. Wilson.

WILSON [*leaning back toward MARION*]. Speak, Oracle! No! Don't tell me now. Put it into that book you're writing.

MARION [*MARION and FEYDAK exchange glances*]. How things get around.

WILSON. It's been in the back of my mind for years, Marion . . . to have you paint me. Now that we're both in town together . . .

MARION. Well, I'd love to . . .

WILSON. In the costume of the Dane. [*MARION and FEYDAK exchange a look.*] [*Strikes a pose.*] I'd like to be done in *his* costume. I hope, Mr. Feydak, that they won't break your spirit in Hollywood as they've almost broken mine!

FEYDAK [*with a smile*]. My spirit is indestructible!

WILSON [*rises and crosses to rear of sofa*

and pats FEYDAK on the back]. I'm glad to hear it. [*Returns to left of model-stand and stands with his right foot on it.*] You know, for years I've been begging them to do Shakespeare. [*Gesticulates.*]

MARION [*interrupting him*]. Sit down and be comfortable.

WILSON. They simply won't listen. But I'm going to give up acting and produce!

MARION. Oh, good God! Don't do that!

WILSON. Why not!

MARION. What would Minnie do with her night off?

WILSON [*smiles*]. My public, eh?

MARION. Yes!

WILSON. Quite so! [*Patronizingly.*] You artists who work in media like painting or literature— [*To FEYDAK.*] Or music, that too is a beautiful art, Mr. Feydak—transcends speech—transcends everything, by saying nothing it says all.

FEYDAK. Ja! [*The doorbell rings.*]

WILSON. You are certainly lucky compared to us poor actors. We— [*MINNIE enters and crosses to hall-door upper center.*] Wouldn't it be ironic if all that remained of me after I am gone were your painting of me. That is why I want it perhaps—my poor grasp on immortality.

FEYDAK. You see, Marion, you confer immortality!

MARION. I think immortality is an over-rated commodity. But tell me, Tympi, what are you doing away from Hollywood?

MINNIE [*comes in announcing:*] Der Herr Nolan! [*MINNIE then looks at WILSON. WILSON stands—looks at MINNIE.*]

MARION. Show him in. Show him in. [*With a lingering look at WILSON, MINNIE goes back. To others, after watching MINNIE exit.*] You see!

FEYDAK. The effect is instantaneous—like music . . . [*NOLAN enters. MINNIE*



## Twentieth Century Blues

follows NOLAN in and exits into kitchen, murmuring ecstatically, "Gott! Ist er schön!" looking at WILSON.]

MARION. Hello, Bunny! [*Introducing NOLAN.*] You know Mr. Feydak. Mr. Nolan, this is Warwick Wilson, you've heard of him. [*FEYDAK bows to NOLAN, who returns the bow.*]

WILSON. It's a pleasure, Mr. Nolan. I've heard of you indeed! [*They shake hands.*]

MARION. You're late for your sitting, Bunny. Will the presence of these gentlemen embarrass you? I don't mind if you don't.

NOLAN [*has entered rather worried and angry. He has a magazine rolled in his hand. He now speaks very irritably.*]. As a matter of fact, Marion . . .

MARION [*putting him in throne chair on model-stand*]. Oh, sit down like a good fellow. The light is getting bad. [*NOLAN sits. WILSON sits on the right arm of the sofa left on which FEYDAK is sitting. MARION gets to work on BUNNY.*] How did you find me, Tympi?

WILSON. I read in a magazine that you were barging into literature . . .

NOLAN [*half rising, showing magazine*]. This is true then!

MARION. Don't get up, Bunny . . . [*Nevertheless she takes the magazine and looks at it.*] Well, Dickie has gone and spread himself, hasn't he? [*She sits on sofa left between WILSON and FEYDAK.*] Look here, Feydie! [*Shows him the full-page announcement of her book in magazine.*]

FEYDAK [*looking*]. Do you think you can live up to this?

MARION. Why will they write this sort of thing! [*Rises and goes back.*] Makes me out a kind of female Casanova. [*She drops the magazine on the stand at NOLAN's feet.*] Well, they'll be disappointed.

NOLAN [*bitterly*]. Will they?

MARION. Bunny! [*But she thinks nothing of it—merely pushes him into a better light.*]

FEYDAK [*tactfully—he senses danger*]. May I ask, Mr. Wilson—are you making a picture at the moment?

WILSON. No, I'm in New York making some personal appearances.

MARION. Personal appearances. I love that phrase. Has such an air of magnanimity about it. [*Crosses to painting.*]

WILSON. Pretty boring, I can tell you! I've got writer's cramp signing autograph books. It's a perfect martyrdom I assure you. It's no fun at all. [*WILSON crosses to stand—puts his right foot on it, leans on his knee with his right arm and studies NOLAN, his face not six inches away from NOLAN'S. NOLAN fidgets.*]

MARION. I can imagine! What's the matter, Bunny? You seem under a strain today . . . not relaxed.

NOLAN [*bursting out and glaring at all of them*]. It's like being watched while you're taking a bath!

MARION. Oh, I'm so sorry, Bunny!

FEYDAK [*rising*]. I quite sympathize with Mr. Nolan.

WILSON [*moves away*]. Supposing I were so shy, eh, Mr. Nolan?

FEYDAK [*crosses to MARION who is above her easel, right*]. I'm off, Marion. [*Kisses her hand.*] Auf wiedersehen!

MARION [*meaningfully*]. You'll have to go—[*WILSON sits again on arm of sofa left.*] both of you . . .

WILSON [*rises*]. I was just going myself. My next appearance is at 6:45. [*Speaks to others.*]

FEYDAK [*to help her*]. Perhaps I can drop you, Mr. Wilson.

WILSON [*faces FEYDAK*]. No, I'll drop you . . . [*Turns to MARION*] I say, Mar-

## Biography

ion . . . [FEYDAK, *helpless, goes up-stage putting on coat.*]

MARION. Yes, Tympi?

WILSON. If you started my portrait right away and it turns out—I am sure it will turn out—you might put it in your book, mightn't you? I'm frankly sick of just appearing in fan-magazines.

MARION. We'll see. Why not?

WILSON. Splendid! *Don't fail to come to-night.* Good-by, dearest Marion. Good-by again, Mr. Nolan. [*He starts to shake NOLAN's hand but is interrupted by MARION, almost screaming.*]

MARION. No, no, no! Don't do *that*—don't touch him.

WILSON. Most happy! See you later . . . [*He waves himself off at last—MARION returns to her easel.*]

MARION [*to FEYDAK*]. Don't forget—I'm dining with you.

FEYDAK [*like the player in Hamlet who burlesques Polonius*]. Most happy—see you later. [*FEYDAK leaves.*]

MARION [*with relief*]. Now then . . .

NOLAN [*muttering to himself*]. Silly ass!

MARION [*working on painting*]. That young man is one of the most famous people in the world, do you realize that, Bunny? His profile follows you all over Europe—and Asia. Ubiquitous profile. Have you ever seen him?

NOLAN [*unswerved*]. He's a silly ass!

MARION. I admit he's somewhat on that side—but that other one—that Feydie—he's the darling of the world!

NOLAN [*very short—bitterly*]. Evidently!

MARION [*surprised*]. Bunny!

NOLAN [*savage now*]. Who isn't a darling! Everyone's a darling as far as I can see! The world's full of darlings. Your world at any rate.

MARION. But, darling . . . [*She sud-*

*denly stops—sits right end of sofa right.*]

Oh, Bunny, I remember now!

NOLAN. You remember what!

MARION. Tympi! Why I nicknamed him Tympi. Don't you see?

NOLAN. No, I don't see . . .

MARION. For tympanum—a large instrument in the orchestra producing a hollow sound. [*She beats an imaginary drum with her paint brush.*] Boom! [*Suddenly NOLAN quits the pose.*] What is it?

NOLAN. I can't sit today. I'm not in the mood.

MARION. I could tell there was something worrying you.

NOLAN. There is something worrying me!

MARION. Well, what is it?

NOLAN. This confounded story! Are you really writing it?

MARION. Well, yes—I am.

NOLAN. What do you intend to tell?

MARION. Well, that's a rather difficult question to answer—it's like asking me what I've been doing all my life.

NOLAN. When does this biography start?

MARION [*beginning to wonder about this questioning*]. With my birth—coincidence, isn't it?

NOLAN. All the time back home—when you were a girl in Knoxville?

MARION. Yes, of course. I've had a wonderful time going back over it all.

NOLAN. Everything?

MARION. Everything I can remember.

NOLAN. Do I come into it?

MARION [*smiling to herself*]. You do! You certainly do!

NOLAN. You must leave me out of that story!

MARION. But, Bunny, how can I possibly leave you out?

NOLAN. You must, that's all!

MARION. But how can I? You were too

## Twentieth Century Blues

important—think of the role you played in my life. By your own confession, Bunny darling, you—you started me. That's a good idea for a chapter-heading, isn't it? "Bunny Starts Me." I must put that down.

NOLAN. This is no joke, Marion. [*With menace.*] I warn you . . .

MARION. Warn me! Let me understand you. Are you seriously asking me to give up an opportunity like this—just because . . .

NOLAN [*rises and gets down from the model-stand. Speaks with brutal command.*] Opportunity! Cheap exhibitionism! A chance to flaunt your affairs in a rag like this. [*Indicating magazine on piano.*] I won't be drawn into it. I can tell you that! [*He is in a towering rage.*]

MARION [*after a pause*]. I know that by your standards, Bunny, I'm a loose character. But there are other standards, there just are.

NOLAN [*crosses to center—drops magazine on model-stand*]. Not in Tennessee!

MARION [*rises*]. I'm afraid you're provincial, Bunny.

NOLAN. I'm sorry.

MARION [*takes off her smock, crosses to small table down right, gets her notes, then crosses to desk upper right*]. I don't care what the advertisements say about my story—I know what I'm writing . . .

NOLAN. I'm sorry.

MARION. That's all right. [*But this has gone pretty deep.*]

NOLAN [*after a pause*]. If you're doing this for money—[*She turns and watches him.*] I know you've been pretty hard up—I promise you I'll get you commissions enough to more than make up for this story. I was talking about you only the other day to my prospective father-in-law. He's a big man, you know. I am sure I can get him to sit for you . . .

MARION. The tip isn't big enough.

NOLAN [*scared now that he sees the extent to which he has hurt her*]. Marion! . . .

MARION. It amuses me to write my life. I am pleasure-loving—you know that—I will therefore pass up the opportunity of painting your big father-in-law. I will even give up the pleasure of painting you. And we can part friends, then, can't we? [*She reaches out her hand to him.*] Good-by, Bunny.

NOLAN [*devastated*]. Marion—you can't do this to me—you can't send me away like this . . .

MARION. I don't think ever in my life that I've had a vulgar quarrel with anyone. This is the nearest I've come to it. I'm a little annoyed with you for that. I think it's better we part now while we can still do so with some—dignity. Shall we?

NOLAN. You don't realize what's involved—or you wouldn't talk like that . . .

MARION. What *is* involved?

NOLAN. My entire career. That's what's involved.

MARION. Oh!

NOLAN. This is the most critical moment of my life. My fiancée's father is the most powerful leader of opinion in my state. Frankly, I depend on him for support. To have this kind of thing bandied about now might cause a permanent rift between him and me—might seriously interfere not only with my candidacy for the Senate, but with my marriage.

MARION. They are interlocking—I quite understand.

NOLAN. A revelation of this kind—coming at this moment—might be fatal . . .

MARION. Revelation! You make me feel like—I can't tell you what you make me

## Biography

feel like . . . [*She laughs—semi-hysterically.*]

NOLAN [*sepulchral*]. You must give this up, Marion.

MARION. I've met distinguished men abroad—politicians, statesmen—a Prime Minister even—and this kind of "revelation"—as you so luridly call it, is no more to them than a theme for after-dinner banter. They take it in their stride. My God, Bunny, you take it so big!

NOLAN. These people I'm depending on to elect me aren't sophisticated like you or me. [*MARION looks at NOLAN with some surprise.*] What I mean is—they're country people essentially—my future father-in-law is sympathetic to their point of view.

MARION. Tell me—your father-in-law, is he the man with the chest-expansion?

NOLAN. He's a fine sturdy man—as you perhaps know, he makes a fetish of exercise.

MARION [*bubbling again*]. You see his pictures in shorts in Health Magazines.

NOLAN. There's no disgrace in that.

MARION [*sits right arm of sofa left*]. It doesn't shock me, Bunny. I was just identifying him, that's all.

NOLAN. I owe everything to Kinnicott—I wouldn't be running for the Senate right now if not for him. I can't risk offending him.

MARION. What the devil's happened to you anyway? You used to be quite a nice boy—even fun occasionally . . .

NOLAN [*wistful—turns away*]. Maybe—if you had stuck to me . . .

MARION. Ts! Ts! Ts! Poor Bunny. I'm sorry for you. Really I am! [*She strokes his arm.*]

NOLAN [*suddenly passionate—faces her*]. Don't touch me!

MARION [*amazed*]. Bunny!

NOLAN. Do you think I'm not human!

MARION. Well, if you aren't the most contradictory . . .

NOLAN. I realized the moment I came in here the other day—the moment I saw you . . .

MARION [*interrupting*]. But Bunny! You're engaged and you're going to be a Senator.

NOLAN [*walks away from her*]. Forget it! Forget I ever said it. . . .

MARION. You bewilder me . . .

NOLAN [*bitterly*]. I'm not surprised I bewilder you. You've spent your life among a lot of foreign counts. It's well known that foreigners are more immoral than we are.

MARION. I'm very touched. I am really. [*She kisses him in a friendly way.*]

NOLAN. Don't do that! I forbid you!

MARION. All right. I'll never attack you again, I promise.

NOLAN. I wish I had never come back into your life—it was a terrible mistake—you'd forgotten me.

MARION [*seriously*]. Oh, you're wrong. First love—one doesn't forget that.

NOLAN [*passionately*]. But you did! You forgot me! And if you got the chance again, you'd humiliate me again.

MARION. Humiliate! What queer notions you have—Is it a question of pride or vanity between us? We're old friends—friends.

NOLAN [*moves a step right*]. Please forget this—I don't know what came over me—I . . .

MARION. Of course. There's nothing to forget. [*Moves a step toward him.*] It's quite all right, dear . . . [*She pats him on his hand.*] Oh, excuse me . . .

NOLAN. I warn you, Marion—I solemnly warn you—if you persist in this—

MARION. Never in my life have I seen a

## Twentieth Century Blues

man vacillate so between passion and threat . . .

NOLAN. I shall find ways to stop you. Mr. Kinnicott, my future father-in-law, is a powerful man.

MARION. I know. Extraordinary biceps.

NOLAN. I warn you, Marion. This matter is beyond flippancy.

MARION [*sits*]. There'll be some very distinguished people in my biography. You needn't be ashamed.

NOLAN. That movie-actor!

MARION. Tympi in Hamlet costume—you in a toga. I'll print your portraits on opposite pages—my two men!

NOLAN. You are malicious!

MARION. I must admit, Bunny, that you provoke in me all my malicious impulses. You come here suddenly and you convey to me what I've missed in not marrying you. [*The back doorbell rings. MINNIE crosses to answer it during MARION's speech.*] You dangle before me the inventory of your felicities—a career, a fortune, a fabulous bride—and then, because I get a chance to chronicle my own adventures—you object—you tell me I mustn't! I have a nice nature, Bunny, or I should be angry—I should be indignant. [*KURT enters.*]

NOLAN [*sharply and with threat*]. Now, Marion, I've warned you . . . You'll regret this.

MARION. Hello, Dickie, do talk to Bunny for a minute, will you? [*Crosses to the stairs and starts up them to her bedroom.*] I've simply got to change. [*MINNIE enters up center and exits left.*] Feydie's coming to take me out to dinner.

NOLAN. But, Marion . . .

MARION. I couldn't do anything about this in any case, Bunny dear, because I've promised Dickie. In fact, I signed something, didn't I, Dickie? Don't go away

either of you. . . . [*MARION blows them a kiss and exits into her bedroom. A pause between the two men. KURT crosses down stage to above the model-stand. Suddenly, NOLAN goes to KURT and reaches out his hand to him.*]

NOLAN. How do you do, young man?

KURT [*very much surprised*]. How do you do? [*He looks at him narrowly, his head a little on one side, a terrier appraising a mastiff.*]

NOLAN. I am very glad to see you.

KURT. Isn't that nice . . . ?

NOLAN. You may be surprised to learn that on the one occasion when we met you made quite an impression on me.

KURT. Did I?

NOLAN [*sits sofa right*]. You did. Sit down. In fact—I hope you don't mind—if you will allow me as a prerogative of seniority—to ask you a few questions. I have a purpose in mind and not—I trust—an idle purpose.

KURT. Shoot! [*Sits.*] Anything to enlighten the professor! [*He knows he is going to be pumped and has decided to be casual, naive and even respectful.*]

NOLAN [*clearing his throat*]. Now then—your present position on the magazine you represent—have you been on it long?

KURT. About two years.

NOLAN. And before that?

KURT. Newspaper work.

NOLAN. And before that?

KURT. Tramping around the world. Odd jobs. Quite a variety.

NOLAN. College?

KURT. Believe it or not—Yale—two years . . . worked my way through—washed dishes.

NOLAN. Very interesting preparation . . . very interesting . . . Tell me now—your present work—do you find it interesting? Is the remuneration satisfactory?

## Biography

KURT. Two hundred smackers a week. That's twice what I've ever earned in my life before.

NOLAN. Now then—to come to the point—no doubt you've heard of my prospective father-in-law, Mr. Orrin Kinnicott?

KURT. Heard of him! We pay him the compliment of imitation. He is our model, our criterion, our guiding star!

NOLAN. As you know, Mr. Kinnicott's interests are varied. He owns some powerful newspapers in my state. The other day I heard him say that he wanted a new man in Washington.

KURT [*playing naively excited*]. Now that's to give one's eye-teeth for!

NOLAN [*pleased at the result*]. I think it might be possible to swing it—very possible.

KURT. God, what a break!

NOLAN. As it happens Mr. Kinnicott is at present in town. I shall arrange an appointment for you in the next few days. Naturally, I expect you to keep the matter entirely confidential.

KURT. Naturally! You needn't worry on that score, Senator, I assure you.

NOLAN. Thank you, Mr. Kurt. That is all I ask. [*A pause.*]

KURT. Mr. Nolan—do you mind if I ask you something?

NOLAN. Certainly not . . .

KURT. You won't consider me impertinent?

NOLAN [*with a smile*]. I don't object to impertinence, Mr. Kurt. I was often considered impertinent myself when I was your age.

KURT. Why are you making me this offer?

NOLAN. I am not making you an offer. I shall merely attempt to expedite . . .

KURT. Why? The first time we met we didn't exactly hit it off, now, did we?

Why then are you going to all this trouble?

NOLAN. I have discussed you with Miss Froude who is an old friend of mine and whose opinion I greatly respect. She thinks very highly of you, Mr. Kurt. My own impression . . .

KURT [*inexorably*]. Why? What, as they say, is the pay-off?

NOLAN. I'll tell you. I'll tell you quite frankly. I don't want Miss Froude's autobiography, which you have persuaded her to write, to appear in your magazine. I want it killed!

KURT. Oh! You want it killed?

NOLAN. Exactly.

KURT. Why?

NOLAN. Marion knows why. We needn't go into that.

KURT [*wounded by a sudden and devastating jealousy*]. Good God! You! You too! [*MARION enters from balcony. She is wearing a dove-colored evening-dress—the gamine transformed into lady-of-the-world.*]

MARION. Well! How have you two boys been getting on? What do you think?

KURT [*seething. Crosses to foot of stairs*]. I'll tell you what I think. . . .

MARION. About the dress I mean . . . [*She does a turn for them.*]

NOLAN [*without looking up at her or the dress. He is watching KURT*]. It's charming.

MARION. Thank you, Bunny. With all his faults Bunny is much more satisfactory than you are, Dickie.

KURT [*at boiling point*]. He's chivalrous he is! His chivalry is so exquisite that he has just been attempting to bribe me to keep your story from being published. His gallantry is so delicate that he's terrified about being mentioned in it.

MARION [*comes down stairs during*

## Twentieth Century Blues

KURT's *speech*]. Don't be so worked up about it, Dickie. You're another one who takes it big. It's catching!

KURT [*flaring at her*]. You're not very sensitive. . . .

MARION. Why should I be? You misapprehend Bunny. If he doesn't want to be in the same story with me that's his business. And it's nothing to do with chivalry or gallantry or nonsense like that.

NOLAN. Marion—this young man . . .

KURT [*taunting him*]. What about Washington, Mr. Nolan? Mr. Nolan, a prospective Senator offers to bribe me with a post in Washington controlled by his prospective father-in-law. . . .

MARION. If it's a good job take it, Dickie, by all means. . . .

KURT. I am afraid, Marion, that your code is more relaxed than mine . . .

MARION. Code, nonsense! I gave up codes long ago. I'm a big laissez-faire girl!

NOLAN. If this young man is an example of the distinguished company you've come to associate with, Marion . . .

MARION. Don't quarrel, children—please. It distresses me.

NOLAN. He's extremely objectionable.

KURT. What about Washington, now, Senator? Are you still to expedite . . . !

[KURT and NOLAN stand glaring at each other. MARION tries to calm the troubled waters. Crosses to NOLAN.]

MARION. Really, Dickie, you're very naughty. Don't mind him, Bunny. He's very young.

KURT. And incorruptible!

NOLAN. Marion, I claim the privilege of a friendship that antedates Mr. Kurt's by some years to beg you, very solemnly, not to prostitute your talents to his contemptible, sensation-mongering rag.

KURT [*faces them*]. There's a Senatorial sentence!

MARION. Hush, Dickie, hush! Bunny darling, it's true that Dickie's magazine isn't the Edinburgh Review. On the other hand your assumption that my story will be vulgar and sensational is a little gratuitous, isn't it?

NOLAN. You *refuse* then?

MARION [*gently but with a serious overtone*]. Yes. This—censorship before publication seems to me, shall we say, unfair. It is—even in an old friend—dictatorial.

NOLAN [*with an air of finality*]. You leave me then no alternative. I am very sorry.

KURT. Don't let him frighten you, Marion, he can't do anything.

NOLAN. I can forgive you anything, Marion, but the fact that you value my wishes below those of this insolent young man.

MARION. But this insolent young man hasn't anything to do with it! Can't you see, Bunny—it's my own wish that is involved.

NOLAN. I have explained to you the special circumstances. If you would consent to delay publication till after election. . . . [*She turns to KURT to ask him to make this concession but can't get a word in. She is wedged between both of them.*]

KURT. She has nothing to do with the publication-date. That's my province. Gosh, what a chance for the circulation-manager in Tennessee! [*He rubs his palms together in mock anticipation of profits.*]

NOLAN [*losing his temper at last*]. You are tampering with more than you bargain for Mr.—Mr. . . .

KURT. Kurt.

MARION. With a "K."

NOLAN. There are ways of dealing with a young man like this and you'll soon find out what they are!

## Biography

KURT, Them's harsh words, Senator!

NOLAN. You wait and see.

MARION. Bunny!

NOLAN. Don't speak to me! I never want to see you again! [*He goes out.*]

MARION [*really distressed*]. This is awful!

KURT [*highly elated*]. It's wonderful!

MARION. But I'm very fond of Bunny. Oh, dear! I'll telephone him tonight . . .

KURT [*grimly*]. Over my dead body!

MARION. Can it be, Dickie, that I control the election of Senators from Tennessee? [*Sits right end of sofa left.*]

KURT [*after a moment*]. How could you ever have loved a stuffed-shirt like that!

MARION. He wasn't a stuffed-shirt. That's the funny part. He was charming. He was a charming boy. Rather thin. Rather reticent. He was much nicer than you as a matter of fact. . . .

KURT. I'm sure he was!

MARION. He was much less violent!

KURT [*sits*]. Hypocritical old buccaneer!

MARION. He used to work hard all day and at night he studied law. We used to walk the country lanes and dream about the future. He was scared—he was wistful. How did he emerge into this successful, ambitious, over-cautious—mediocrity? How do we all emerge into what we are? How did I emerge into what I am? I've dug up some of my old diaries. I was a tremulous young girl. I was eager. I believe I was naive. Look at me now! Time, Dickie . . . What will you be at forty? A bond-holder and a commuter . . . Oh, Dickie!

KURT [*tensely*]. I'll never be forty!

MARION [*laughing*]. How will you avoid it?

KURT [*same tone*]. I'll use myself up before I'm forty.

MARION. Do you think so? I don't think

so. [*Rises.*] I sometimes wake up on certain mornings feeling absolutely—immortal! Indestructible! One is perpetually reborn I think, Dickie. Everyone should write one's life I think—but not for publication. For oneself. A kind of spiritual Spring-cleaning!

KURT. The Ego preening . . . !

MARION [*sitting right arm of sofa left*]. Well, why not? After all, one's ego is all one really has.

KURT. Reminiscence is easy. So is anticipation. It's the *present* that's difficult and most people are too lazy or too indifferent to cope with it.

MARION. It's natural for you to say that—at your age one has no past and no future either because the intimation of the future comes only with the sense of the past . . .

KURT [*with sudden bitterness*]. I see the past as an *evil thing*—to be extirpated.

MARION. How awful! [*Pause.*] Why?

KURT. That's not important.

MARION [*rises*]. You freeze up so whenever I try to find out anything about you. I'm not used to that. Usually people open up to me—I'm a born confidante. But not you. . . . I'm interested too, because in an odd way I've become very fond of you.

KURT. My life's very dull, I assure you. My past lacks completely what you would call *glamor*.

MARION. No, Dickie. I don't believe that. I don't believe that's true of anybody's life.

KURT. Well, it's true. Moreover it's true of most people's lives. It's easy for anyone who's lived as you have to make romantic generalizations. It's very pleasant for you to believe them. Well, I shan't disillusion you. [*Turns away from her.*] Why should I? It's not important. [*She is sitting down, smoking a cigarette in a holder, watching*



## Twentieth Century Blues

him. He becomes conscious that she is studying him.]

MARION. I had no idea you felt this way about me—you despise me, don't you? [He doesn't answer.] Don't you?

KURT. Yes.

MARION. Why?

KURT [rises; walks away]. Why did we start this?

MARION. You're annoyed at having even momentarily revealed yourself, aren't you? I'll have your secret, Dickie—I'll pluck out the heart of your mystery.

KURT. Secret! Mystery! More romantic nonsense. I have no secret. Nobody has a secret. There are different kinds of greed, different kinds of ambition—that's all!

MARION. Oh, you simplify too much—really I'm afraid you do. Tell me—why do you disapprove of me? Is it—as Bunny does—on moral grounds?

KURT [right end of sofa left—angrily]. You're superficial and casual and irresponsible. You take life, which is a tragic thing, as though it were a trivial bed-room farce. You're a second-rate artist who's acquired a reputation through vamping celebrities to sit for you.

MARION [quietly, she continues smoking]. Go on . . .

KURT. As an unglamorous upstart who has been forced to make my way I resent parasitism, that's all!

MARION. Isn't there in biology something about benevolent parasites, Dickie? Many great men, I believe, owe a debt of gratitude to their parasites, as many plants do . . . There are varieties. Again, Dickie, you simplify unduly. It is a defect of the radical and the young.

KURT. To return to the Honorable Nolan . . .

MARION. I return to him with relief . . .

KURT. He may exert pressure on us, you know . . .

MARION. How? I'm very interested. . . .

KURT. Well, for one thing, his future father-in-law might get me fired.

MARION. Could he do that?

KURT. He might. He might easily. [MARION sits upright and looks at him.] Some form of bribery. He might go to my chief and offer him a bigger job—anything.

MARION. All on account of my poor little biography,—it seems incredible that anyone would take all this trouble. . . .

KURT. I'd just like to see them try—I'd just like to, that's all . . .

MARION. What would you do?

KURT. Do? I'd make the Honorable Nolan the laughing stock of the country and his athletic father-in-law too. I'd just plaster them, that's what I'd do.

MARION. You sound vindictive.

KURT. Baby, I am vindictive!

MARION. Funny, I'm just amused . . .

KURT. Well, everything's a spectacle to you! [Turns away from her.] God, how I hate detachment!

MARION. Your desire to break up Bunny is quite impersonal then.

KURT. Surgical. Just as impersonal as that.

MARION. You're a funny boy, Dickie.

KURT [turns away from her]. I'm not funny and I'm not a boy. You've been around with dilettantes so long you don't recognize seriousness when you see it.

MARION. But it's the serious people who are funny, Dickie! Look at Bunny.

KURT [faces her]. Yes, look at him! An epitome of the brainless muddle of contemporary life, of all the self-seeking, second-raters who rise to power and wield power. That's why I'm going to do him in. [The phone rings—for a moment they

## Biography

*pay no attention to it.]* It's the most beautiful chance anybody ever had and I'd just like to see them try and stop me. [*Phone keeps ringing. MARION answers it.*]

MARION. Yes . . . yes . . . certainly. [*To KURT—a bit surprised.*] It's for you . . . [*She hands him hand-receiver.*]

KURT [*takes phone and talks from rear of sofa*]. Yes. Hello . . . sure. Well, what about it? . . . Oh, you want to talk to me about it, do you? . . . I thought you would . . . I'll be around . . . sure . . . so long. [*He hangs up.*] They've begun! [*He is almost gay with the heady scent of battle.*]

MARION. What do you mean?

KURT. That was my chief. He wants to talk to me about your story. Kinnicott's begun to put the screws on him. He's going to ask me to kill it. All right—I'll kill it!

MARION [*faintly*]. I can't believe it. . . .

KURT. Neff's had a call from the father-in-law . . .

MARION. Did he say so?

KURT. No, but you can bet he has!

MARION. I must say this puts my back up . . .

KURT. I'll make a fight for it to keep my job. But if he's stubborn I'll tell him to go to Hell—and go to a publisher with your manuscript. And if I don't get quick action that way I'll publish it myself—I'll put every penny I've saved into it . . .

MARION. But why should you? Why does it mean so much to you?

KURT. Do you think I'd miss a chance like this?—It'll test the calibre of our magazines, of our press, our Senators, our morality . . .

MARION. All on account of my poor little story—how Vicki would have laughed!

KURT [*a spasm of jealousy again*]. Who's Vicki?

MARION [*aware of it*]. An old friend to whom I'm dedicating the biography.

KURT. Yeah! [*Sits beside her, then speaks.*] Where is he now?

MARION. He's dead. [*A pause. She gets up and crosses to center.*] I've always rather despised these contemporary women who publicize their emotions. [*Another moment. She walks up-stage. She is thinking aloud.*] And here I am doing it myself. Too much self-revelation these days. Loud speakers in the confessional. Why should I add to the noise? I think, as far as this story is concerned, I'll call it a day, Dickie.

KURT. What!

MARION. Let's forget all about it, shall we?

KURT. If you let me down now, I'll hate you.

MARION. Will you? Why won't you take me into your confidence then? Why won't you tell me about yourself? What are you after?

KURT [*after a moment of inhibition decides to reveal his secret dream*]. My ambition is to be critic-at-large of things-as-they-are. I want to find out everything there is to know about the intimate structure of things. I want to reduce the whole system to absurdity. I want to laugh the powers that be out of existence in a great winnowing gale of laughter.

MARION. That's an interesting research. Of course it strikes me it's vitiated by one thing—you have a preconceived idea of what you will find. In a research biased like that from the start you are apt to overlook much that is noble and generous and gentle.

KURT [*challenging and bitter*]. Have you found generosity and gentleness and nobility?

## Twentieth Century Blues

MARION. A good deal—yes.

KURT. Well, I haven't!

MARION. I'm sorry for you.

KURT. You needn't be. Reserve your pity for weaklings. I don't need it!

MARION. Are you so strong? [*A pause.*

KURT *doesn't answer.*] How old are you, Dickie?

KURT [*turns away*]. What difference does that make?

MARION. Who do you live with?

KURT. I live alone.

MARION. Are you in love with anybody?

KURT. No.

MARION. Where are your parents?

KURT. They're dead.

MARION. Long?

KURT. My mother is. I hardly remember her. Just barely remember her.

MARION. Your father? [*He doesn't answer.*] Do you remember your father?

KURT [*in a strange voice*]. Yes. I remember him all right.

MARION. What did your father do?

KURT. He was a coal miner.

MARION. Oh! Won't you tell me about him? I'd like to know.

KURT. I was a kid of fourteen. There was a strike. One day my father took me out for a walk. Sunny spring morning. We stopped to listen to an organizer. My father was a mild little man with kind of faded, tired blue eyes. We stood on the outskirts of the crowd. My father was holding me by the hand. Suddenly some-

body shouted: The militia! There was a shot. Everybody scattered. My father was bewildered—he didn't know which way to turn. A second later he crumpled down beside me. He was bleeding. He was still holding my hand. He died like that. . . . [*A moment. He concludes harshly—coldly—like steel.*] Are there any other glamorous facts of my existence you would like to know?

MARION [*stirred to her heart*]. You poor boy . . . I knew there was something . . . I knew . . . !

KURT [*hard and ironic*]. It's trivial really. People exaggerate the importance of human life. One has to die. [*Turns to her.*] The point is to have fun while you're alive, isn't it? Well, you've managed. I congratulate you!

MARION [*her heart full*]. Dickie darling—why are you so bitter against me? Why against me . . . ?

KURT. Do you want to know that too? Well, it's because . . . [*His voice rises. She suddenly doesn't want him to speak.*]

MARION. Hush dearest—hush—don't say any more—I understand—not any more . . . [*His defenses vanish suddenly. He sinks to his knees beside her, his arms around her.*]

KURT. Marion, my angel!

MARION [*infinitely compassionate, stroking his hair*]. Dickie—Dickie—Dickie . . . Why have you been afraid to love me?

## ACT III

[SCENE: *The same.*

TIME: *Late afternoon. Two weeks later.*

*The telephone is ringing as the curtain rises. There is a moment and MINNIE enters and crosses to rear of the table rear of the sofa left. She picks up the receiver.*]

MINNIE [*speaking into the phone*]. Hello.—No, Mr. Kurt, she's not yet back. Vot. You're not coming home to dinner?! —But I've made the pfannkuchen you like —Vot?—You're tired of my damn pfannkuchen—[*She shouts angrily.*] Every

## Biography

night I make dinner and you and Marion go out!—I'm not yelling—Vot? Vot shall I tell Marion?—Vot— [*Doorbell rings.*] Wait—wait a minute.—Someone's ringing. [*She puts the receiver on the table and goes to the door. MINNIE shows in LEANDER NOLAN who is followed by ORRIN KINNICOTT, who is a big, well-developed Southerner, about fifty-five, with a high-pitched voice. He is a superbly built man with a magnificent chest development. He is aware that he is a fine figure of a man, impeccably dressed in formal afternoon clothes.*]

NOLAN [*to MINNIE, who has preceded him into the room*]. Did Miss Froude say she was expecting us for tea, Minnie?

MINNIE. No, Mr. Nolan. She didn't say nothing to me.

NOLAN. Not even when she'd be back?

MINNIE [*hangs up coats*]. No. She just went out.

NOLAN. All right, Minnie. We'll wait.

MINNIE. Yes, Mr. Nolan. [*She is about to go out into kitchen when she remembers that KURT is on the telephone. She picks up the receiver and says*] Hello—Mr. Kurt—you dere?—Good-by! [*She then hangs up the receiver and exits left.*]

KINNICOTT [*querulously. Sits sofa right*]. Did you tell her four o'clock?

NOLAN. Yes. I told her. [*NOLAN's manner with his father-in-law-to-be in this scene conveys the beginnings of a secret irritation, an inner rebellion.*]

KINNICOTT. Does she know I'm a busy man?

NOLAN [*gloomily*]. She's not impressed much by busy men.

KINNICOTT. I know these fly-by-night characters. I've dealt with 'em before . . . Bad— [*He sniffs the air of the room*] bad air. [*Rises—tries to open window, fails,*

*sits on window seat.*] Bet she's under-exercised.

NOLAN. On the contrary—she's radiantly healthy!

KINNICOTT. Cosmetics, I bet! These fly-by-night characters . . .

NOLAN [*very irritated*]. Why do you keep calling her a fly-by-night character? She's nothing of the sort!

KINNICOTT [*crosses to NOLAN*]. Look here, Leander. . . .

NOLAN. Well?

KINNICOTT. Have you been entirely frank with me, in this matter?

NOLAN. Of course I have. . . .

KINNICOTT [*cryptic*]. About the past—yes. But I refer to the present.

NOLAN. I don't know what you mean.

KINNICOTT. I think you do know what I mean. Sometimes the way you talk I suspect—I suspect, Leander—that you are still in love with this woman.

NOLAN. Nonsense! I simply tell you that she's not a fly-by-night character. That doesn't mean I'm in love with her!

KINNICOTT. My daughter feels the same thing.

NOLAN. Slade! You've discussed this with Slade!

KINNICOTT. She's discussed it with me. She's no fool—that girl. She's noticed things lately.

NOLAN. What things?

KINNICOTT. She says she talks to you and that you're off somewhere else—dreaming. I tried to put her on another scent—but she was positive. She said: "Come on now, dad—don't stall me—come clean!" So I told her!

NOLAN. You did!

KINNICOTT. Yes.

NOLAN. When?

KINNICOTT. Yesterday. Told her it happened fifteen years ago, that you were a

## Twentieth Century Blues

naive young feller, didn't know anything about women, were just naturally taken in . . .

NOLAN. That's not true though. I was not taken in.

KINNICOTT. There you go again—defending the woman that's endangering your entire career and using up my energies and yours when you ought to be home right now getting together with folks and thinking how to cinch this here election. Not going to be a walk-over, you know. [*Again trying the window.*] How do you open this thing to get some air? [*Sits on window seat.*]

NOLAN. I don't know. What did Slade say when you told her?

KINNICOTT. Nothin'. You know Slade's not the talkin' kind.

NOLAN. Funny she didn't mention it to me last night.

KINNICOTT. Didn't want to worry yer probably . . . all wool and a yard wide that girl is. I warn you, Leander, don't tamper with the most precious and rare thing . . .

NOLAN [*impatient of oratory*]. I know—I know. The point is—what are we going to do?

KINNICOTT. Course I can get that young fellow—what's his name?

NOLAN. Kurt.

KINNICOTT. I can get him fired all right. From what you've told me, Leander, he's got something else up his sleeve. . . .

NOLAN. I'm afraid so.

KINNICOTT. That's what I want to find out from your lady friend. And I've got a pretty sure idea right now what it is.

NOLAN. What do you mean?

KINNICOTT. Money!

NOLAN [*still not understanding*]. Money . . . ?

KINNICOTT. Blackmail!

NOLAN. You're crazy!

KINNICOTT. You don't know much about women, Leander; when you know the sex as well as I do you'll know that every woman has blackmail up her sleeve.

NOLAN. Look here, Orrin . . . !

KINNICOTT [*rises, confronts NOLAN*]. Now, you listen to me for a moment, son . . . This situation's gone about far enough right now. You'd better make up your mind whether you want this blackmailing female or whether you want my daughter . . . and you'd better make it up right quick.

NOLAN [*flaring up*]. I resent your tone, Orrin, and I won't be ordered around as if I were a high-grade servant!

KINNICOTT. Now, son, when you get control of your temper, and cool down a little bit, you'll see that my ordering hasn't been so bad for you. I'll acknowledge you were mighty successful as a lawyer, but in politics you're nothing but a novice.

NOLAN [*resentful*]. Am I! [*Doorbell.*]

KINNICOTT. Just look back a bit, that's all—I've had to push and bolster you to get you where you are.

NOLAN [*desperately*]. I know—I have every reason to be grateful to you—that's the worst of it. [*MINNIE enters and crosses to hall door. Both men turn and watch to see who it is that is calling.*]

MINNIE [*speaking to someone at the door*]. Ja, Fräulein?

SLADE [*off stage*]. Is Miss Froude in?

MINNIE. Nein, Fräulein.

SLADE [*entering*]. Well, I'll just wait. [*SLADE KINNICOTT is a good-looking, dark, high-spirited girl, a rather inspiring and healthy example of the generation growing up on D. H. Lawrence. To her father and NOLAN as she crosses down stage between them.*] Hello.

NOLAN. Sladel .

## Biography

KINNICOTT [*severely*]. Daughter! What are you doing here?

SLADE. Came to have my picture painted. What are you?

KINNICOTT. Your coming here at this time is most inopportune, daughter. We are here on business.

SLADE [*mischievously*]. I can imagine!

NOLAN. I'm very glad you came, Slade. I want you to meet the woman whom your father has just been accusing of the most reprehensible crimes!

SLADE. I'm pretty anxious to get a load of her myself. [*Looks about the room taking it in and then sits on the left end of the sofa below the piano.*] Nice lay-out. Gee, I wish I were artistic. What a lucky gal she is! A paint-brush and an easel and she can set up shop anywhere in the world. That's independence for you! Gosh! [*She looks about, admiring and envious.*]

KINNICOTT. Why must you come here to get your picture painted? We have tolerable good artists in Knoxville.

SLADE. Well, if you *must* know I'm very keen to have a heart-to-heart talk with my fiancé's old girl. Natural, isn't it?

KINNICOTT. No, it isn't natural!

NOLAN [*crosses angrily to window and back toward KINNICOTT and sits on stool down right near sofa on which SLADE and her father are sitting*]. This is what you get for telling her, Orrin.

SLADE. If you think I didn't suspect something was up ever since Froude arrived here, you don't know your little bride. Maybe I haven't been watching the clouds gather on that classic brow! Where is my rival? Don't tell me she's holding up two big shots like you two boys.

KINNICOTT. Slade, this is no time . . . please leave us before she comes.

SLADE. Not I! Just my luck when a story is going to come out which has something

in it I want to read you two killjoys are going to suppress it!

NOLAN. This isn't exactly a joke, you know, Slade. . . .

SLADE. I mean it. . . .

KINNICOTT [*sadly*]. I've spoiled you, Slade—I've been too easy with you. . . .

SLADE. At least I hope you'll buy the *manuscript*. My God, father, I'm curious. Can't you understand that? I want to find out what Leander was like before he became ambitious. I've a right to know! This story might hurt you with the voters in Tennessee, Leander, but it's given me a kick out of you I didn't know was there! How did she make you, Leander—that's what I'd like to know. You've been pretty unapproachable to me but I sort of took it for granted National Figures were like that. Also I'd gotten to the point when I was going to suggest that we break our engagement, but this little incident revives my interest.

NOLAN [*furious*]. Indeed!

SLADE. Yes, indeed. Where is this woman? What is that secret? How to Make National Figures . . . there's a title for you!

KINNICOTT. Slade, you're talking too much! Shut up!

NOLAN [*rises and moves stool toward them a bit*]. No, she isn't at all. . . . [*To SLADE.*] If your interest in me requires the artificial stimulus of an episode that happened twenty years ago . . .

SLADE [*leaning toward him*]. It requires something. . . .

NOLAN [*leaning closer toward her. The three heads are now close together, KINNICOTT's in the center.*]. Does it!

SLADE. It does. We were getting so that conversation, when we were alone, was rather difficult. [*NOLAN starts to argue.*]

## Twentieth Century Blues

KINNICOTT [*pushes them apart*]. Children! Children!

NOLAN. We're not children! [*To SLADE*]. If our relationship is so—

SLADE. Tenuous . . . ?

NOLAN. . . . That it requires artificial . . .

SLADE. Respiration . . . ?

NOLAN. If it's as bad as that then I think perhaps we'd both better . . .

SLADE. Call it a day? . . . You'll need me in the Senate, Leander, to fill in the gaps when you get hung up in a speech. Consider carefully what you are discarding. . . .

NOLAN. If that is the case I tell you solemnly we'd better separate now.

SLADE [*mock tragedy*]. Father, Leander is giving your daughter the air. Do something!

KINNICOTT. I don't blame him for being irritated. You should not be here. Please go home.

SLADE [*lights cigarette*]. Don't worry, dad. I'll get him back.

KINNICOTT. This is a bad mess, Leander. And I must tell you frankly that I don't altogether approve of your attitude . . .

NOLAN. And I must tell you frankly that I don't approve of *yours*. . . .

KINNICOTT. Is that so!

NOLAN. I don't like your tone in speaking of a woman with whom at one time I had a relation of the tenderest emotion—for whom I still have a high regard. . . .

KINNICOTT. That's evident anyway!

NOLAN. When you apply to such a woman the terms you used before Slade came in, when you impute to her motives so base, you cast an equal reflection on my judgment and my character. . . .

SLADE. And that, pop, is *lèse-majesté*.

NOLAN. And it may be perfectly true, Slade, that knowing Miss Froude has

spoiled me for the flippant modernisms with which you study. . . .

SLADE. I'm dying to ask her one thing: when you made love to her in the old days did it always sound like a prepared speech on tariff schedules?

KINNICOTT. This is getting us nowhere. . . .

SLADE. Well, dad, what do you expect? Leander and I have broken our engagement since I came into this room. That's progress, isn't it?

KINNICOTT. Your coming here at this time was most unfortunate.

SLADE. Leander doesn't think so. [*Ironically*]. He's free now to pursue the lady for whom he still has a high regard. [*Rises*]. Are we no longer engaged, Leander?

NOLAN. That's not for me to say.

SLADE [*rises and shakes hands with NOLAN*]. Gentleman to the last! And at the very moment—

KINNICOTT [*in despair—speaks as SLADE starts to speak*]. Slade, if you would only go home!

SLADE [*crosses left*]. Just at the very moment when I was saying to myself: Well, if a brilliant and beautiful woman who has played footie with royalty in the capitols of the world loved him, maybe there's a secret charm in him that I've overlooked—just when I was saying that and preparing to probe and discover, [*Lightly*] he gives me the air. [*Sits on sofa left*]. By God, Orrin, there's life for you. [*Bell rings*]. Ah, that must be my rival! [*NOLAN gets up and fixes his tie expecting MARION. But it is KURT who comes in. He faces them. He is in a white heat of anger.*]

KURT. Well, gentlemen, I'm not surprised to find you here! [*Drops hat on model-stand and comes down stage left.*]

## Biography

NOLAN [*about to introduce KINNICOTT*]. How do you do, Mr. Kurt . . . this . . .

KURT. I can guess who it is. I can guess why you're here. Having failed to intimidate *me* you are here to intimidate Miss Froude. [SLADE *rises, excited by this tempest.*] Well, I can advise you that you will fail with her too.

NOLAN. This is his usual style, Orrin. Don't mind him.

KURT. I have just come from my office where I have been informed by Mr. Neff—[SLADE *stands below KURT—just behind him—watching him.*] whom you doubtless know, Mr. Kinnicott—that I could decide between publishing Miss Froude's story or giving up my job. I invited him to go to Hell. That invitation I now cordially extend to you two gentlemen.

SLADE. Why doesn't somebody introduce me to this interesting young man? [*She comes toward him. KURT is embarrassed, but covers it in a gruff manner. He has actually not been aware of her in the room.*]

KURT. I'm sorry—I—I didn't know. . . .

SLADE. Why are you sorry? I'm Slade Kinnicott. [*She gives him her hand. He takes it, limply.*]

KURT. All right—all right. [*He is disarmed and feels, suddenly, rather foolish.*]

SLADE. Leander, why have you kept me apart from this young man?

KURT. I'm sorry—I . . .

SLADE. Nonsense. What's your name?

KURT. Richard Kurt.

SLADE. Go to it—[*Turns him toward others.*]

KINNICOTT [*impressively—interposing between them*]. You're being very foolish, young man.

KURT [*crosses toward them—to right of model-stand*]. Possibly.

NOLAN. You can't argue with him. I've tried it. He's a fanatic.

KURT. But if you ask me I think *you're* being very foolish.

KINNICOTT [*who wants to find out what's in KURT's mind*]. Are we? How do you figure that, young man?

SLADE [*parroting—crosses and sits on model-stand. She is having a wonderful time*]. Yes, how!

KINNICOTT. Oh, hush your mouth.

KURT. Because I'm going to publish Miss Froude's book myself. And I promise you that it'll be the best-advertised first book that's come out in a long time.

SLADE. Thank God! Will you send me the advance sheets? I'll make it worth your while, Mr. Kurt.

KINNICOTT. I can see you are an extremely impulsive young man. Have you ever inquired, may I ask . . . ?

SLADE [*edges a bit closer to KURT*]. This is going to be dangerous! Look out, Richard. . . . [NOLAN *sits on stool, disgusted with SLADE.*]

KINNICOTT [*smoothly*]. Have you inquired into the penalties for libel, Mr. Kurt?

KURT. Libel! You're going to sue me for libel, are you!

KINNICOTT [*same voice*]. Yes. You and Miss Froude both . . . yes . . .

KURT. Well, you just go ahead and try it, that's all I can tell you. Go ahead and sue. [*Crosses to above NOLAN.*] It'll put Mr. Nolan in a charming position before those *moral* constituents of his, won't it? [*Includes both NOLAN and KINNICOTT.*] Go ahead and sue, both of you—sue your heads off . . . ! I promise the two of you I'll give you the fight of your lives!

SLADE [*delighted*]. Good for you, Richard! [*MARION comes in. She wears a long red velvet coat, and a little red cap stuck*



## Twentieth Century Blues

*on the side of her golden head—she looks a little like Portia. She is at the top of her form.]*

MARION [*beaming with hospitality*]. Well! How nice! Minnie!

KURT [*goes up-stage to right of MARION*]. This chivalrous gentleman has just been proposing to sue you for libel—he considers . . .

SLADE [*who rises and stands just below the model-stand*]. I'm Slade Kinnicott.

MARION [*crosses down stage to her and they shake hands over the model-stand*]. How very nice of you to come! [*Turns and faces KINNICOTT*]. Is this Mr. Kinnicott? [*He bows*]. I'm so glad to see you. [*They shake hands*]. I'm so sorry to be late. [*Waves hello to NOLAN*]. Hello, Bunny.

SLADE [*this is too much for her*]. Oh, my God—BUNNY! [*She sits, overcome*].

MARION [*to NOLAN*]. I'm so sorry . . .

NOLAN [*glaring at SLADE*]. It's all right, Marion!

MARION. Has Minnie given you tea? I'll just . . . Minnie! [*MINNIE enters*]. Tea, Minnie, please. . . [*To the men*]. Or cocktails—highball . . . ?

KINNICOTT. I never drink alcoholic mixtures.

NOLAN [*asserting his independence*]. I'll have a highball!

KINNICOTT. I must tell you, Leander, that I do not approve—

NOLAN. I'll have two whiskies straight!

MARION. Good! Highball for you, Miss Kinnicott?

SLADE. Thanks.

MARION. I'll fix them myself, Minnie. Just bring us some tea, Minnie.

KINNICOTT. Nor do I wish any tea.

KURT [*crosses down left*]. Nor do I.

MARION. Do you mind if I have a cup? Do sit down, Miss Kinnicott. A tiring

day. . . . [SLADE *sits on model-stand*. MARION *goes up to rear of piano*.] Minnie, please bring me a cup of tea—

MINNIE. Ja, Fräulein. [*Remembering*]. A telegram for you, Fräulein.

MARION. Oh, thank you, Minnie. Just put it there on the table. [*MINNIE leaves the telegram on the table rear of the sofa left and then exits left*. MARION *removes her coat, crosses to rear of piano and starts to mix the highballs*]. Now then! What is all this nice cheerful talk about a libel suit? That's what they're always having in England, isn't it, on the least provocation? It's when you've circulated a lie about someone—defamed someone—maliciously—isn't it? Bunny! [*She gives NOLAN his two drinks. He takes them and returns to his position*. MARION *picks up the other glass and crosses with it to SLADE*]. Now then—whom have I defamed?

KURT. You've defamed the Honorable Mr. Nolan!

MARION [*hands drink to SLADE*]. Have I? Oh, I am tired. . . . [*She sits on sofa*]. Sit by me, won't you, Miss Kinnicott?

SLADE [*sauntering over*]. Thanks. [*She sits by MARION on the sofa*].

MARION. You're very pretty. . . .

SLADE [*more warmly*]. Thanks!

MARION. Bunny, I congratulate you. I've heard so much about you, Miss Kinnicott. And I think it's very gracious of you to come and see me. If Bunny lets me I'd like to paint you—[*MINNIE enters*] and give you the portrait for a wedding-present. [*She rises and crosses to above model-stand to get cup of tea from MINNIE*. MINNIE *exits left*]. Thank you, Minnie.

SLADE. You're very lovely.

MARION. Thank you, my dear.

SLADE. I can't tell you how curious I've been about you—I—

## Biography

KINNICOTT. This is all very well—but I'm a busy man . . .

MARION [*looks at KINNICOTT as she crosses and sits right of SLADE. A moment—then MARION speaks*]. It seems so strange to see you with all your clothes on. It seems a pity—as an artist I must say it seems a pity—to conceal that wonderful chest-development that I've admired so often in *The Body Beautiful*.

KINNICOTT. That's neither here nor there.

MARION [*this is almost an aside to SLADE*]. It seems to me that it's decidedly *there*. [*MARION and SLADE laugh quietly together*].

KINNICOTT. Slade, you've upset everything by coming here. . . . [*KURT comes forward. He has been eaten up with irritation because the superb indignation he felt should have been so dissipated by this cascade of small talk. He can stand it no longer*].

KURT [*crosses to right of model-stand*]. If you understand better what these gentlemen mean to do . . . !

NOLAN [*protests*]. It wasn't my idea!

KURT. You wouldn't be quite so friendly, Marion. . . .

MARION. I couldn't possibly be unfriendly to anyone so frank—and—and gladiatorial—as Mr. Kinnicott.

KURT [*furious at her for not letting him launch into it*]. A libel suit . . . !

MARION. Oh, yes! A libel suit! It sounds so cozy. Sit down, won't you? [*KINNICOTT sits on stool*]. A libel suit. Now then—what shall it be about?

KURT. The Honorable Nolan is going to sue you for libel. . . .

NOLAN. I'll punch your head if you say that again. . . .

KURT. On the assumption that when you say in your story that you and he

were lovers you are lying and defaming his character!

MARION. Dear Bunny, you must want to be a Senator very very badly!

NOLAN [*in despair*]. I never said it, I tell you!

MARION. As a matter of fact how could I prove it? Come to think of it, are there any letters? Did you ever write to me, Bunny?

NOLAN. I don't remember.

MARION. I don't think you ever did. You see—we were always—during that dim brief period of your youth—we were always so close—letters were hardly necessary, were they? Did I ever send you any letters, Bunny?

NOLAN. I don't remember, I tell you.

MARION. Neither do I. You might look around in old trunks and places and see if you can find some old letters of an affectionate nature—I'd love to read them—they'd probably make wonderful reading now. Why is it that the things one writes when one's young always sound so foolish afterwards? Has that ever occurred to you, Mr. Kinnicott?

KINNICOTT. I don't admit the fact.

MARION. No?

KINNICOTT. No. I was looking over some old editorials of mine written in the depression of 1907 and they're just as apropos today. I haven't changed my ideas in twenty-five years.

MARION. Haven't you really? How very steadfast. Now if the world were equally changeless, how consistent that would make you. [*To KURT*]. Well, there isn't any documentary evidence.

KURT. It doesn't matter. . . .

KINNICOTT. As I said before, this is getting us nowhere. Don't you think, Miss Froude, that the only way we can settle

## Twentieth Century Blues

this is by ourselves? [*She smiles at him.*] I can see you're a sensible woman.

MARION. I am very sensible.

KINNICOTT. And you and I can settle this matter in short order.

KURT. You don't have to talk to him at all if you don't want to.

MARION [*smiling at KINNICOTT*]. But I'd love to. I've always wanted to meet Mr. Kinnicott. There are some questions I want very much to ask him. [*To the others.*] You can all wait in my bedroom. It's fairly tidy, I think.

SLADE [*to KURT—rises, crosses to him*]. Why don't you take me for a walk, Richard?

MARION [*as KURT hesitates*]. Do that, Dickie. A walk'll do you good.

NOLAN. What'll I do?

MARION [*as if it were another dilemma*]. You wait in my bedroom. [*Aware suddenly of the proprieties.*] No—in Minnie's bedroom. It's just next to the kitchen.

NOLAN [*defiantly*]. I will! [*He exits into bedroom.*]

KURT [*sulky—he doesn't quite like the turn affairs have taken*]. We'll be back in ten minutes.

SLADE [*as they go out*]. You can't tell, Richard. [*MARION draws a deep breath. She assumes at once with KINNICOTT the air of two equals, mature people talking freely to each other after they've gotten rid of the children.*]

MARION [*they cross to sofa left*]. Now we can talk! It's funny—I feel we've put the children to bed and can have a quiet talk after a lot of chatter.

KINNICOTT. Same here!

MARION. Please sit down. [*They do.*]

KINNICOTT. I feel sure you and I can come to an understanding.

MARION. I'm sure we can.

KINNICOTT. Now then about this little

matter of the story—You won't mind if I speak very frankly to you . . . ?

MARION. Not at all.

KINNICOTT. You see, Miss Froude . . .

MARION. Oh, call me Marion. Everybody does.

KINNICOTT. Thanks. Call me Orrin.

MARION. All right, I'll try. Not a very usual name. Orrin. Fits you. Strong. Rugged strength.

KINNICOTT. Thank you.

MARION. You're welcome. What were you going to say when I interrupted you? You were going to say something. . . .

KINNICOTT. I was going to say—you're not at all what I expected to meet.

MARION. No? What did you think I'd be like? Tell me—I'd love to know.

KINNICOTT. Well, you're kind of homey—you know—folksey . . .

MARION. Folksey. [*Smiles.*] After all there's no reason I shouldn't be, is there? I'm just a small-town girl from Tennessee. I sometimes wonder at myself—how I ever got so far away. . . .

KINNICOTT [*positively*]. Metabolism!

MARION. I beg your pardon. . . .

KINNICOTT. I always say—take most of the bad men and most of the loose women—and correct their metabolism and you'll correct them.

MARION. Really?

KINNICOTT [*seriously*]. Absolutely. Trouble with our penology experts—so-called—is that they're psychologists—so-called—when they should be physiologists.

MARION. That is very interesting indeed. Have you ever written anything about that?

KINNICOTT. Off and on.

MARION. Any definitive work I mean?

KINNICOTT. I'm considering doing that right now.

MARION. Oh, I do wish you would! It's

## Biography

extraordinary how little one knows about one's own body, isn't it? I get so impatient of myself sometimes—of my physical limitations. My mind is seething with ideas but I haven't the physical energy to go on working. I tire so quickly—and often for no apparent reason. Why is that, Mr. Kinnicott?

KINNICOTT. Defective— [*She says at same time with him.*]

MARION—KINNICOTT. Metabolism.

KINNICOTT. Tell me—

MARION. What?

KINNICOTT. Do you eat enough rough-age?

MARION. I don't know, off-hand.

KINNICOTT [*firmly*]. Well, you should know!

MARION. As I say, Orrin—one is so ignorant of these fundamental things.

KINNICOTT [*definitely aware now of MARION as a personal possibility*]. I can see this, Marion—if you'd met me—instead of Leander—when you were a young girl—you'd have been a different woman.

MARION. I'm sure I would. Imagine—with one's metabolism disciplined early in life—how far one could go.

KINNICOTT [*confidentially offering her hope*]. It's not too late!

MARION. Isn't it?

KINNICOTT. Er. . . . [*He drops his voice still lower.*] What are you doing tomorrow evenin'?

MARION. I—I'm free.

KINNICOTT [*same voice*]. Will you have dinner with me?

MARION. I'd be delighted.

KINNICOTT. Fine! Then we can go over this little matter of the story and Leander quietly. Leander isn't strong on tact. . . .

MARION. You know, some men aren't.

KINNICOTT. You and I can make a friendly adjustment.

MARION. What fun! [*They chuckle.*]

KINNICOTT. What time shall we meet? Say seven-thirty?

MARION. Let's say eight . . . do you mind?

KINNICOTT. My apartment?

MARION. If you like.

KINNICOTT. Here's my card with the address. It's a roof apartment. I'm a widower.

MARION. Irresistible combination!

KINNICOTT. By the way—

MARION. What?

KINNICOTT. Don't mention our little date for tomorrow evenin' to Leander.

MARION [*rising*]. No, I agree with you. I don't think that would be wise.

KINNICOTT [*nodding trustingly—rises*]. Fine! At seven-thirty?

MARION. No—no. Eight.

KINNICOTT. Oh, yes . . . eight. [*A moment's pause. He visibly preens before her, buttoning his beautifully fitting frock-coat across his heroic chest.*]

MARION [*approving*]. Wonderful! Wonderful!

KINNICOTT [*going toward bedroom. To her*]. Do you mind if I . . . Leander . . .

MARION. Not at all.

KINNICOTT. It'll take the load off his mind. [*He goes out. She can't believe it. The whole situation is so fantastic. She flings off her little red cap and shaking with laughter collapses on the couch. MINNIE comes in to clear up the tea-things.*]

MARION [*as MINNIE enters*]. It's too good to be true, Minnie. . . .

MINNIE. Vat is too good to be true?

MARION. I must write some of it down before I forget it . . . [*The bell again. MARION gets up to make notes on her script.*] A widower's penthouse— [*With an irritated sigh MINNIE goes out to answer bell. MARION sits at desk jotting notes*

## Twentieth Century Blues

*very fast.* SLADE and KURT come in. KURT is morose. MARION gets up to greet them.] Well, children?

SLADE. That walk was a total loss.

MARION [*laughing*]. What did you expect?

SLADE. Well, a little encouragement—just a soupçon . . .

MARION. Dickie's very serious.

SLADE. How did you come out with dad?

MARION. Wonderful! I'm crazy about him!

SLADE. Bet he got you to renig on the story . . .

MARION. Well, he thinks so. However, we're going to discuss it tomorrow evenin'.

SLADE. Thought he'd date you up—could tell by the way he eyed you. . . .

MARION. He's going to teach me how to live in a state of virtuous metabolism.

SLADE. Oh! Don't you believe it! Dad's an awful old chaser!

MARION [*rather shocked*]. Slade!

SLADE [*amused*]. Are you shocked?

MARION. You make me feel a little old-fashioned. [KURT is intensely irritated by this conversation.]

KURT. Where are they?

MARION. They're in there sitting on Minnie's bed. Orrin is probably telling Bunny that everything'll be all right.

SLADE [*sits left of MARION*]. Marion. . . .

MARION. Yes. . . .

SLADE. What is there about Bunny you can't help liking? [*Utterly disgusted, KURT goes to sofa down left and sits staring moodily into a gloomily tinted future.*]

MARION. He's a dear—there's something very touching about Bunny—sweet . . .

SLADE. Were you in love with him once?

MARION. Yes.

SLADE. Are you in love with him now?

MARION. No.

SLADE [*in a whisper*]. Are you in love with—someone else?

MARION [*a moment's pause*]. Yes.

SLADE. I thought you were. He's mad about you.—I envy you, Marion.

MARION. Do you? Why?

SLADE. You're independent. You're—yourself. You can do anything you like.

MARION. Yes, I know. But it's possible one can pay too much for independence. I'm adrift. Sometimes—you know what seems to me the most heavenly thing—the only thing—for a woman? Marriage, children—the dear boundaries of routine . . .

SLADE. If you had married Bunny he would've given 'em to you. He's still in love with you, but he doesn't quite know it. Shall I tell him?

MARION [*parrying*]. What are you talking about?

SLADE. I wish we could change places, Marion. You can with me but I can't with you. [KINNICOTT and NOLAN come in from the bedroom. KINNICOTT is at his most oleaginous.]

KINNICOTT [*to KURT*]. Well, young man! Over your little temper?

KURT. No, I'm not over it! What makes you think I'm over it?

KINNICOTT. Well, well, well! As far as I'm concerned there are no hard feelings. I'm going to call up your employer myself when I get home and tell him, that as far as you are concerned, to let by-gones be by-gones. Can't do more than that, can I?

KURT. To what do I owe this generosity?

KINNICOTT. To the fact that in Miss Froude you have a most gracious friend and interceptor. [*He gives MARION a gallant, old-South bow.*] Miss Froude—this has been a very great pleasure.

## Biography

MARION [*rises—with an answering bow*]. Thank you! [SLADE *also rises*.]

KINNICOTT [*giving her his hand*]. Auf wiedersehen.

MARION. Auf wiedersehen. Ich kann es kaum erwarten!

KINNICOTT [*pretending to understand*]. Yes, oh, yes, yes, of course! [To SLADE.] Come, Slade. [*He goes to hall-door*.]

SLADE. All right, dad. [To NOLAN.] Coming—Bunny?

NOLAN. Well, yes—I'm coming.

SLADE [*to NOLAN*]. You want to stay. Why don't you?

KINNICOTT [*quickly marshaling his little following with a military precision*]. I think Leander had better come with us—

SLADE [*to MARION*]. Good-by, Marion.

MARION [*to SLADE*]. Good-by, Slade. [*They shake hands*.] Come to see me.

SLADE. Thanks, I will.

KINNICOTT [*smiles at MARION*]. Miss Froude! [*Bows to MARION who returns his bow*.] Come, daughter. Come, Leander. [To KURT.] Good-by, young man. No hard feelings. [KURT *glares at him*. KINNICOTT *again bows to MARION*.] Miss Froude! [*MARION is startled into still a third bow. He calls without looking back*.] Come, Slade! Leander!!

SLADE. Bunny! [*As she exits*.]

NOLAN [*lingers an instant then crosses to MARION*]. I'll be back.

MARION. When?

NOLAN. In a few minutes. All right?

MARION. I'll be in. [*He goes out quickly*.] MARION *is in wonderful spirits. She runs to KURT and throws her arms around him*.] Oh, Dickie. That Orrin! That Orrin!

KURT. What did you say to him that put him in such good spirits?

MARION. Everything I said put him in good spirits. I can't wait for tomorrow evenin'. I can't wait for that dinner. It'll

probably consist entirely of roughage—just imaginel He's the quaintest man I ever met in my life. He's too good to be true. [*Sits right of KURT*.]

KURT. Well, he may be quaint to you but to me he's a putrescent old hypocrite and I don't see how you can bear to have him come near you, say less go to dinner with him!

MARION [*sobered by his intensity*]. You're so merciless in your judgments, Dickie. You quite frighten me sometimes—you do really.

KURT. And so do you me.

MARION. I do! That's absurd!

KURT. You do. It's like thinking a person fastidious and exacting and finding her suddenly . . .

MARION. Gross—indiscriminating?

KURT [*bluntly*]. Yes!

MARION. You know, Dickie, I adore you and I'm touched by you and I love you but I'd hate to live in a country where you were Dictator. It would be all right while you loved me but when you stopped. . . .

KURT. It wouldn't make any difference if I stopped—I shouldn't be that kind of a Dictator . . .

MARION [*glances at him. Almost sadly*]. I see you've thought of it. . . .

KURT [*inexorably*]. What did you say to Kinnicott?

MARION. Your manner is so—inquisitorial. I haven't been able to get used to it.

KURT [*angry and jealous*]. I heard you tell Nolan to come back too . . . How do you think I feel?

MARION. Dickie!

KURT. When Nolan sat there and told me he had been your lover, I felt like socking him. Even when we're alone together, I can't forget that . . . yet you encourage him, and Kinnicott— My God, Marion, you seem to like these people!

## Twentieth Century Blues

MARION. I certainly like Slade.

KURT. Well, I don't. She's conceited and over-bearing. Thinks she can have anything she likes because she's Orrin Kinnicott's daughter.

MARION. That's where you're wrong. She's a nice girl—and she's unhappy.

KURT [*bitterly*]. Maladjusted, I suppose!

MARION. Dickie, Dickie, Dickie! Studying you, I can see why so many movements against injustice become such absolute—tyrannies.

KURT. That beautiful detachment again. . . . [*He is white with fury. He hates her at this moment.*]

MARION [*with a little laugh*]. You hate me, don't you . . . ?

KURT. Yes! Temporizing with these . . . ! Yes . . . ! I hate you. [*She says nothing, sits there looking at him.*] These people flout you, they insult you in the most flagrant way. God knows I'm not a gentleman, but it horrifies me to think of the insufferable arrogance of their attitude toward you . . . as if the final insult to their pride and their honor could only come from the discovery that this stuffed shirt Nolan had once been your lover! The blot on the immaculate Tennessee scutcheon! Why, it's the God-damnedest insolence I ever heard of. And yet you flirt and curry favor and bandy with them. And you're amused—always amused!

MARION. Yes. I am amused.

KURT. I can't understand such . . . !

MARION. Of course you can't. That's the difference—one of the differences—between 25 and 35!

KURT. If the time ever comes when I'm amused by what I should hate, I hope somebody shoots me. What did you tell Kinnicott?

MARION. Nothing. Simply nothing. I saw no point in having a scene with him

so I inquired into his favorite subject. He gave me health hints. He thinks tomorrow night he will cajole me—through the exercise of his great personal charm—into giving up my plan to publish.

KURT. Well, why didn't you tell him right out that you wouldn't?

MARION. Because I wanted to avoid a scene.

KURT. You can't always avoid scenes. That's the trouble with you—you expect to go through life as if it were a beautifully lit drawing-room with modulated voices making polite chatter. Life isn't a drawing-room . . . !

MARION. I have—once or twice—suspected it.

KURT [*rises*]. What the devil are you afraid of, anyway? I had a scene today in the office and I was prepared for one here—until you let me down—

MARION [*lightly*]. Prepared? I think you were eager. . . .

KURT. What if I was! It's in your behalf, isn't it?

MARION. Is it? But you forget, Dickie. You're a born martyr. I'm not. I think the most uncomfortable thing about martyrs is that they look down on people who aren't. [*Thinks—looks at him.*] As a matter of fact, Dickie, I don't really understand. Why do you insist so on this story? Why is it so important—now wouldn't it be better to give it up?

KURT. Give it up!

MARION. Yes.

KURT. You'd give it up!

MARION. Why not?

KURT [*obeying a sudden manic impulse*]. After all this—after all I've—! Oh, yes, of course! Then you could marry Nolan and live happily forever after. And be amused. Good-by! [*He rushes up center,*

## Biography

*grabs his hat from the stand as he passes it, and continues on out the door.]*

MARION [*rises and runs after him*]. Dickie!

KURT [*going out the door*]. Good-by!

MARION. Dickie! Dickie! [*The door slams. MARION walks back into the room. A pause. She stands still for a moment; she shakes her head. . . . She is very distressed and saddened and a deep unhappiness is gnawing in her heart, an awareness of the vast, uncrossable deserts between the souls of human beings. She makes a little helpless gesture with her hands, murmuring to herself.*] Poor Dickie! Poor boy! [*In its Italian folder the manuscript of her book is lying on the piano before her. She picks it up—she gives the effect of weighing the script in her hand. Slowly, as if in a trance, she walks with the script to the Franklin stove downstage left and sits before it on a little stool. She opens the manuscript and then the isinglass door of the stove. The light from behind it glows on her face. She looks again down on her manuscript, at this morsel of her recorded past. She tears out a page or two and puts them into the fire. A moment and she has put the entire script into the stove and she sits there watching its cremation. The doorbell rings. As MINNIE comes in to answer it, she shuts the door of the stove quickly.*]

MARION. It's probably Mr. Nolan. [*MINNIE goes out. MARION makes a visible effort to shake herself out of her mood. NOLAN comes in followed by MINNIE who crosses stage and goes in the bedroom left. NOLAN is excited and distraught.*]

NOLAN. Hello, Marion. . . .

MARION. Hello, Bunny dear.

NOLAN [*sparring for time*]. Excuse me for rushing in on you like this . . . I . . .

MARION. I've been expecting you.

NOLAN. That's right! I told you I was coming back, didn't I? . . .

MARION. You did—yes.

NOLAN. I must have known—I must have felt it—what would happen. . . .

Marion . . .

MARION. Bunny dear, you're all worked up. Won't you have a highball?

NOLAN. No, thanks. Marion. . . .

MARION. Yes, Bunny . . .

NOLAN. I've done it!

MARION. You've done what?

NOLAN. I've broken with Slade. I've broken with Kinnicott. I've broken with all of them.

MARION. You haven't!

NOLAN. Yes! I have!

MARION. Oh—oh, Bunny!

NOLAN [*sits*]. When Orrin told me what you'd done—that you were going to give up the story. . . .

MARION. But I—

NOLAN. He said he was sure he could get you to do it. It all came over me—your generosity—your wonderful generosity.

MARION [*beyond words*]. Oh, Bunny! [*Sits. She is in a sort of laughing despair. He hardly notices her attitude. He rushes on.*]

NOLAN. I realized in that moment that in all this time—since I'd been seeing you—I'd been hoping you wouldn't give up the story, that you would go through with it, that my career would go to smash. . . .

MARION [*faintly*]. Bunny. . . .

NOLAN. I saw then that all this—which I'd been telling myself I wanted—Slade, a career, Washington, public life—all of it—that I didn't want it, that I was sick at the prospect of it—that I wasn't up to it, that I was scared to death of it. I saw all that—and I told her—I told Slade. . . .

MARION. You did!



## Twentieth Century Blues

NOLAN. Yes.

MARION. What did she say?

NOLAN. She said she knew it. She's clever that girl. She's cleverer than I am. She's cleverer than you are. I'm afraid of her cleverness. I'm uncomfortable with it. Marion, I know I seem stupid and ridiculous to you—just a Babbitt—clumsy—but I love you, Marion. I always have—never anyone else. Let me go with you wherever you go— [*Lest she think it a "proposition."*] I mean—I want to marry you.

MARION. I'm terribly touched by this, Bunny darling, but I can't marry you.

NOLAN. Why not?

MARION. If I married you it would be for the wrong reasons. And it wouldn't be in character really—neither for me—nor for you. Besides that, I think you're wrong about Slade. She's very nice, you know. I like her very much.

NOLAN. I don't understand her. I never will.

MARION. If you did you'd like her. You better have another try. Really, Bunny, I wish you would.

NOLAN. Letting me down easy, aren't you?

MARION. It's Slade's manner that shocks you—her modern—gestures. If you really understood me—as you think you do—I'd really shock you very much, Bunny.

NOLAN. I'll risk it. Marion, my dearest Marion, won't you give me some hope? . . .

MARION [*sees she must tell him*]. Besides—I'm in love.

NOLAN [*stunned*]. Really! With whom?

MARION. Dickie . . . You see, Bunny . . . [*He can't get over this. There is a considerable pause.*] You see, Bunny . . .

NOLAN [*slowly*]. Do you mean that you and he—you don't mean that . . . ?

MARION. Yes, Bunny.

NOLAN [*dazed*]. Are you going to marry him?

MARION. No.

NOLAN [*he passes his hand over his forehead*]. This is a shock to me, Marion.

MARION [*gently*]. I thought it only fair to tell you.

NOLAN [*in a sudden passion*]. You—you. . . [*He feels like striking her, controls himself with difficulty.*] Anybody else but him . . . !

MARION. You see, Bunny.

NOLAN [*after a moment—rises*]. Sorry! Funny, isn't it? Joke, isn't it?

MARION. I'm terribly fond of you, Bunny. [*Takes his hand.*] I always will be. That kind of tenderness outlasts many things.

NOLAN [*blindly*]. I'll go on, I suppose.

MARION. Of course you will! [NOLAN crosses to model-stand and gets his hat. KURT comes in. There is a silence. NOLAN forces himself to look at him. KURT does not meet his glance. KURT is white and shaken—not in the least truculent.] Good-by, Bunny dear. Bunny!

NOLAN. Yes, Marion.

MARION. Will you do me a favor?

NOLAN. Yes.

MARION. Will you please tell Mr. Kinnicott for me—that as I've been called out of town suddenly—I can't dine with him tomorrow night. You will see him, won't you, and you'll tell him?

NOLAN. Yes. [NOLAN leaves. A silence again. . . . Suddenly KURT goes to her, embraces her with a kind of hopeless intensity.]

KURT [*in a whisper, like a child*]. Please forgive me. . . .

MARION. Yes.

KURT. These moods come over me—I can't control myself—afterwards I hate

## Biography

myself—it's because I love you so much—I can't bear to . . .

MARION. I know, dear—I know. . . .

KURT. I'm torn up all the time—torn to bits.

MARION. I know, dear . . .

KURT. When this is all blown over—could we—do you think . . .

MARION. What, dear?

KURT. If we could only go away together, the two of us—somewhere away from people, by ourselves?

MARION. Why not, Dickie? We can go now, if you want to. . . .

KURT. Now? But you're crazy. How can we possibly leave now—with the book . . .

MARION. Dickie—I must tell you. . . .

KURT. You must tell me what?

MARION. You must be patient—you must hear me out for once—you must try to understand my point of view. [*She leads him to sofa left and sits beside him.*]

KURT. What do you mean?

MARION. You know, Dickie, I've been very troubled about you. I've been sad. I've been sad.

KURT. I was angry . . . I didn't mean . . . It was just that . . .

MARION. No, you don't understand—it wasn't your anger that troubled me. It was ourselves—the difference between us—not the years alone but the immutable difference in temperament. Your hates frighten me, Dickie. These people—poor Bunny, that ridiculous fellow Kinnicott—to you these rather ineffectual, blundering people symbolize the forces that have hurt you and you hate them. But I don't hate them. I can't hate them. Without feeling it, I can understand your hate but I can't bring myself to foster it. To you, this book has become a crusade. It couldn't be to me. Do you know, Dickie dear—and this has

made me laugh so to myself—that there was nothing in the book about Bunny that would ever have been recognized by anybody. It was an idyllic chapter of first-love—that's all—and there was nothing in it that could remotely have been connected with the Bunny that is now. . . .

KURT. So much the better—! Think of the spectacle they'll make of themselves—destroyed by laughter. . . .

MARION. I don't believe in destructive campaigns, Dickie . . . outside of the shocking vulgarity of it all—I couldn't do it—for the distress it would cause. . . .

KURT. You've decided not to publish then. . . .

MARION. I've destroyed the book, Dickie.

KURT. You've destroyed it!

MARION. Yes. I'm sorry.

KURT. You traitor!

MARION. It seemed the simple thing to do—the inevitable thing.

KURT. What about *me*? You might have consulted me—after what I've . . .

MARION. I'm terribly sorry—but I couldn't possibly have published that book.

KURT [*in a queer voice*]. I see now why everything is this way. . . .

MARION. I couldn't . . . !

KURT. Why the injustice and the cruelty go on—year after year—century after century—without change—because—as they grow older—people become—*tolerant*! Things amuse them. I hate you and I hate your tolerance. I always did.

MARION. I know you do. You hate my essential quality—the thing that is me. That's what I was thinking just now and that's what made me sad.

KURT. Nothing to be said, is there? [*Rises.*] Good-by.

MARION [*rises*]. All right! [*KURT starts to go. She calls after him, pitifully.*] Won't you kiss me good-by?

## Twentieth Century Blues

KURT. All right. [MARION goes up after him. They kiss each other passionately.]

MARION [whispering to him]. I would try to change you. I know I would. And if I changed you I should destroy what makes me love you. Good-by, my darling. Good-by, my dearest. Go quickly. [KURT goes up-stage and exits without a word. He is blinded by pain.] Dickie . . . ! [MARION is left alone. She is trembling a little. She feels cold. She goes to the stove and sits in front of it, her back to it, trying to get warm. She becomes aware that her eyes are full of tears. As MINNIE comes in, she brushes them away.]

MINNIE. Are you worried from anything, Marion?

MARION. No, Minnie. I'm all right.

MINNIE. I tink maybe dot telegram bring you bad news.

MARION. Telegram? What telegram?

MINNIE. Dot telegram I bring you.

MARION. Of course—I haven't even—where is it?

MINNIE [gets telegram from table rear of sofa left and hands it to MARION]. There it is!

MARION. Thank you, Minnie. [Opens telegram and reads it.] This is from heaven! Minnie, I want you to pack right away. We've leaving! [She springs up.]

MINNIE. Leaving? Ven?

MARION. Right away. Tonight! This is from Feydie! Listen! [Reads telegram aloud to MINNIE.] "Can get you commission to paint prize-winners Motion Picture Academy—wire answer at once. Feydie." [Hysterically grateful for the mercy of having something to do at once, of being busy, of not having time to think.] Something always turns up for me! Pack everything, Minnie. I want to get out right away. [She rushes up-stage right, picks up her hat and coat and then runs to the stairs left.]

MINNIE. Don't you tink you better wait till tomorrow?

MARION. No, Minnie. Once the temptation to a journey comes into my head I can't bear it till I'm on my way! This time, Minnie, we'll have a real trip. From Hollywood we'll go to Honolulu and from Honolulu to China. How would you like that, Minnie? [She starts up the stairs.]

MINNIE [for her, enthusiastic]. Fine, Marion! [Calls after her as she runs up-stairs.] Dot crazy Kurt he goes vit us?

MARION [as she disappears into her bedroom]. No, Minnie—no one—we travel alone!

THE END

## PROFESSOR SEA GULL

by JOSEPH MITCHELL

JOE GOULD is a jaunty and emaciated little man who has been a notable in the cafeterias, diners, barrooms, and dumps of Greenwich Village for a quarter of a cen-

tury. He sometimes brags rather wryly that he is the last of the bohemians. "All the others fell by the wayside," he says. "Some are in the grave, some are in the

From Joseph Mitchell, *McSorley's Wonderful Saloon*. Reprinted by permission of the publishers, Duell, Sloan & Pearce, Inc. Copyright 1942 by Joseph Mitchell. Originally appeared in *The New Yorker*.

## Professor Sea Gull

loony bin, and some are in the advertising business." Gould's life is by no means care-free; he is constantly tormented by what he calls "the three H's"—homelessness, hunger, and hangovers. He sleeps on benches in subway stations, on the floor in the studios of friends, and in quarter-a-night flophouses. Once in a while he trudges up to one of Father Divine's Extension Heavens in lower Harlem and gets a night's lodging for fifteen cents. He is five feet four and he hardly ever weighs more than ninety-five pounds. Not long ago he told a friend that he hadn't eaten a square meal since June, 1936, when he bummed up to Cambridge and attended a banquet during a reunion of the Harvard class of 1911, of which he is a member. "I'm the foremost authority in the U. S. on the subject of doing without," he says. He tells people that he lives on "air, self-esteem, cigarette butts, cowboy coffee, fried-egg sandwiches, and ketchup." Cowboy coffee is black coffee without sugar. After finishing a sandwich, Gould customarily empties a bottle or two of ketchup on his plate and eats it with a spoon. The countermen in the Jefferson Diner, on Village Square, which is one of his hangouts, gather up the ketchup bottles and hide them the moment he puts his head in the door. "I don't particularly like the confounded stuff," he says, "but I make it a practice to eat all I can get. It's the only grub I know of that's free of charge."

Gould is a Yankee. His branch of the Goulds has been in New England since 1635, and he is related to the Lowell, Lawrence, Storer, and Vroom families. "There's nothing accidental about me," he once said. "I'll tell you what it took to make me what I am today. It took old Yankee blood, an overwhelming aversion

to possessions, four years of Harvard, and twenty-five years of beating the living hell out of my insides with bad hooch and bad food. I'm out of joint with the rest of the human race because I don't want to own anything. If Mr. Chrysler tried to make me a present of the Chrysler Building, I'd damn near break my neck fleeing from him. I wouldn't own it; it'd own me. Back home in Massachusetts I'd be called an old Yankee crank. Here I'm called a bohemian. It's six of one, half a dozen of the other." Gould has a twangy voice and a Harvard accent. Bartenders and countermen in the Village refer to him as The Professor, Professor Bloomingdale, Professor Sea Gull, or The Mongoose. He dresses in the castoff clothes of his friends. His overcoat, suit, shirt, and even his shoes are all invariably two or three sizes too large, but he wears them with a forlorn-Chaplinlike rakishness. "Just look at me," he says. "The only thing that fits is the necktie." On bitter winter days he puts a layer of newspapers between his shirt and undershirt. "I'm snobbish," he says. "I only use the *Times*." He is fond of unusual headgear—a toboggan, a beret, or a yachting cap. One evening last summer he appeared at a party in a seersucker suit, a polo shirt, a scarlet cummerbund, sandals, and a yachting cap, all hand-me-downs. He uses a long ivory cigarette-holder, and a good deal of the time he smokes butts picked up off the sidewalks.

Bohemianism has aged Gould considerably beyond his years. He has got in the habit lately of asking people he has just met to guess his age. Their guesses range between sixty-five and seventy-five; he is fifty-three. He is never hurt by this; he looks upon it as proof of his superiority. "I get more living done in one year," he says, "than ordinary humans do in ten."

## *Twentieth Century Blues*

He is squint-eyed and toothless, his spectacles slip down to the end of his nose a moment after he puts them on, and his lower jaw swivels from side to side when he talks; sometimes, because of these things, he distinctly resembles Mahatma Gandhi. He is aware of this. Once, in Romany Marie's, a basement bohemian gathering place in the Village, he draped a tablecloth over his shoulders and sat cross-legged on the floor for half an hour or so, gabbling all the while in a weird, made-up language. People who came in were taken aback when they caught sight of him; one woman said she had no idea Mr. Gould was visiting the United States.

Gould is bald on top, but the hair at the back of his head is long and frizzly, and he has a bushy, cinnamon-colored beard, which he says he trims every other Easter. He doesn't wear his spectacles on the street and without them he has the wild, unfocussed stare of an old scholar who has strained his eyes on small print. Even in the Village many people turn and look at him. He is stooped and he moves rapidly, grumbling to himself, with his head thrust forward and held to one side. Under his left arm he usually totes a bulging, greasy, brown pasteboard portfolio, and he swings his right arm aggressively. As he hurries along, he seems to be warding off an imaginary enemy. Don Freeman, the artist, a friend of his, once made a sketch of him walking. Freeman called the sketch "Joe Gould versus the Elements." Gould is as restless and footloose as an alley cat, and he takes long hikes about the city, now and then disappearing from the Village for weeks at a time and mystifying his friends; they have never been able to figure out where he goes. When he returns, always looking pleased with himself, he makes a few cryptic remarks, giggles, and

then shuts up. "I went on a bird walk along the waterfront with an old countess," he said after his most recent absence. "The countess and I spent three weeks studying sea gulls."

Gould is almost never seen without his portfolio. He sits on it while he eats and he sleeps with it under his head. It usually contains a mass of manuscripts and notes, a dictionary, a bottle of ink, his extra shirts and socks, a cake of soap, a hairbrush, a paper bag of bread crumbs, and a paper bag of hard, round, dime-store candy of the type called sour balls. "I fight fatigue with sour balls," he says. The crumbs are for pigeons; like many other eccentrics, Gould is a pigeon feeder. He is devoted to a flock which makes its headquarters atop and around the statue of Garibaldi in Washington Square. These pigeons know him. When he comes up and takes a seat on the plinth of the statue, they flutter down and perch on his head and shoulders, waiting for him to bring out his bag of crumbs. He has given names to some of them. "Come here, Boss Tweed," he says. "A lady in Stewart's didn't finish her whole-wheat toast this morning and when she went out, bingo, I snatched it off her plate especially for you. Hello, Big Bosom. Hello, Poppit. Hello, Lady Astor. Hello, St. John the Baptist. Hello, Polly Adler. Hello, Fiorello, you old goat, how're you today?"

Although Gould strives to give the impression that he is a philosophical loafer, he has done an immense amount of work during his career as a bohemian. Every day, even when he is groggy as the result of hunger, he spends at least a couple of hours laboring on a formless, rather mysterious book which he calls "An Oral History of Our Time." He began this book twenty-six years ago, and it is nowhere

near finished. His preoccupation with it seems to be principally responsible for the way he lives; a steady job of any kind, he says, would interfere with his thinking. Depending on the weather, he writes in parks, in doorways, in flophouse lobbies, in cafeterias, on benches on "L" platforms, in subway trains, and in public libraries. When he is in the proper mood, he writes until he is exhausted, and he gets into the mood at peculiar times. He says that one night he sat for seven hours in a booth in a Third Avenue bar and grill, listening to a beery old Hungarian woman, once a madam and once a dealer in cocaine and now a soup cook in a hospital, tell the story of her life. Three days later, around four o'clock in the morning, on a cot in the Hotel Defender, at 300 Bowery, he was awakened by the foghorns of tugs on the East River and was unable to go back to sleep because he felt that he was in the exact mood to put the old soup cook's biography in his history. He has an abnormal memory; if he is sufficiently impressed by a conversation, he can keep it in his head, even if it is lengthy and senseless, for many days, much of it word for word. He had a bad cold, but he got up, dressed under a red exit light, and, tiptoeing so as not to disturb the men sleeping on cots all around him, went downstairs to the lobby.

He wrote in the lobby from 4:15 A.M. until noon. Then he left the Defender, drank some coffee in a Bowery diner, and walked up to the Public Library. He plugged away at a table in the genealogy room, which is one of his rainy-day hang-outs and which he says he prefers to the main reading room because it is gloomier, until it closed at 6 P.M. Then he moved into the main reading room and stayed there, seldom taking his eyes off his work,

until the Library locked up for the night at 10 P.M. He ate a couple of egg sandwiches and a quantity of ketchup in a Times Square cafeteria. Then, not having two bits for a flophouse and being too engrossed to go to the Village and seek shelter, he hurried into the West Side subway and rode the balance of the night, scribbling ceaselessly while the train he was aboard made three round trips between the New Lots Avenue station in Brooklyn and the Van Cortlandt Park station in the Bronx. He kept his portfolio on his lap and used it as a desk. He has the endurance of the possessed. Whenever he got too sleepy to concentrate, he shook his head vigorously and then brought out his bag of sour balls and popped one in his mouth. People stared at him, and once he was interrupted by a drunk who asked him what in the name of God he was writing. Gould knows how to get rid of inquisitive drunks. He pointed at his left ear and said, "What? What's that? Deaf as a post. Can't hear a word." The drunk lost all interest in him. "Day was breaking when I left the subway," Gould says. "I was sneezing my head off, my eyes were sore, my knees were shaky, I was hungry as a bitch wolf, and I had exactly eight cents to my name. I didn't care. My history was longer by eleven thousand brand-new words, and at that moment I bet there wasn't a chairman of the board in all New York as happy as I."

Gould is haunted by the fear that he will die before he has the first draft of the Oral History finished. It is already eleven times as long as the Bible. He estimates that the manuscript contains 9,000,000 words, all in longhand. It may well be the lengthiest unpublished work in existence. Gould does his writing in nickel composition books, the kind that children use in

## *Twentieth Century Blues*

school, and the Oral History and the notes he has made for it fill two hundred and seventy of them, all of which are tattered and grimy and stained with coffee, grease, and beer. Using a fountain pen, he covers both sides of each page, leaving no margins anywhere, and his penmanship is poor; hundreds of thousands of words are legible only to him. He has never been able to interest a publisher in the Oral History. At one time or another he has lugged armfuls of it into fourteen publishing offices. "Half of them said it was obscene and outrageous and to get it out of there as quick as I could," he says, "and the others said they couldn't read my handwriting." Experiences of this nature do not dismay Gould; he keeps telling himself that it is posterity he is writing for, anyway. In his breast pocket, sealed in a dingy envelope, he always carries a will bequeathing two-thirds of the manuscript to the Harvard Library and the other third to the Smithsonian Institution. "A couple of generations after I'm dead and gone," he likes to say, "the Ph.D.'s will start lousing through my work. Just imagine their surprise. 'Why, I be damned,' they'll say, 'this fellow was the most brilliant historian of the century.' They'll give me my due. I don't claim that all of the Oral History is first-class, but some of it will live as long as the English language." Gould used to keep his composition books in a dusty pile on the floor of a closet in a friend's photography studio in the Village. Whenever he filled a book, he would come in and toss it on the pile. Several months ago, after hearing that the Metropolitan Museum had moved its most valuable paintings to a bombproof storage place somewhere inland, he became panicky. He made a huge, oilcloth-covered bale of the Oral History and entrusted it for the

duration to a woman he knows who owns a duck-and-chicken farm near Huntington, Long Island. The farmhouse has a stone cellar.

Gould puts into the Oral History only things he has seen or heard. At least half of it is made up of conversations taken down verbatim or summarized; hence the title. "What people say is history," Gould says. "What we used to think was history—all that chitty-chat about Caesar, Napoleon, treaties, inventions, big battles—is only formal history and largely false. I'll put down the informal history of the shirt-sleeved multitude—what they had to say about their jobs, love affairs, vittles, spree, scrapes, and sorrows—or I'll perish in the attempt." The Oral History is a great hodgepodge and kitchen midden of hearsay, the fruit, according to Gould's estimate, of more than twenty thousand conversations. In it are the hopelessly incoherent biographies of hundreds of bums, accounts of the wanderings of seamen encountered in South Street barrooms, grisly descriptions of hospital and clinic experiences ("Did you ever have a painful operation or disease?" is one of the first questions that Gould, fountain pen and composition book in hand, asks a person he has just met), summaries of innumerable Union Square and Columbus Circle harangues, testimonies given by converts at Salvation Army street meetings, and the addled opinions of scores of park-bench oracles and gin-mill savants. For a time Gould haunted the all-night greasy spoons in the vicinity of Bellevue Hospital, eavesdropping on tired internes, nurses, ambulance-drivers, scrubwomen, embalming-school students, and morgue workers, and faithfully recording their talk. He scurries up and down Fifth Avenue during parades, feverishly taking notes. Gould

## Professor Sea Gull

writes with great candor, and the percentage of obscenity in the Oral History is high. He has a chapter called "Examples of the So-Called Dirty Story of Our Time," to which he makes almost daily additions. In another chapter are many rhymes and observations which he found scribbled on the walls of subway wash-rooms. He believes that such things are as truly historical as the strategy of General Robert E. Lee. Hundreds of thousands of words are devoted to the drunken behavior and the sexual adventures of various Greenwich Villagers in the twenties. There are hundreds of reports of ginny Village parties, including gossip about the guests and faithful reports of their arguments on such subjects as reincarnation, birth control, free love, psychoanalysis, Christian Science, Swedenborgianism, vegetarianism, alcoholism, and different political and art isms. "I have fully covered what might be termed the intellectual underworld of my time," Gould says. There are detailed descriptions of night life in the Village speakeasies, basement cabarets, and eating places which he frequented at one time or another and which are all now out of existence, such as the Little Quakeress, the Original Julius, Hubert's Cafeteria, the Troubadour Tavern, Alice McCollister's, and Eli Greifer's Last Oupost of Bohemia Tea Shoppe.

He is a night wanderer, and he has put down descriptions of dreadful things he has seen on dark New York streets—descriptions, for example, of the herds of big gray rats that come out in the hours before dawn in some neighborhoods of the lower East Side and Harlem and unconcernedly walk the sidewalks. "I sometimes believe that these rats are not rats at all," he says, "but the damned and aching souls of tenement landlords." A great deal of

the Oral History is in diary form. Gould is afflicted with total recall, and now and then he painstakingly writes down everything he did for a day, a week, or a month. Sometimes he writes a chapter in which he monotonously and hideously curses some person or institution. Here and there are rambling essays on such subjects as the flophouse flea, spaghetti, the zipper as a sign of the decay of civilization, false teeth, insanity, the jury system, remorse, cafeteria cooking, and the emasculating effect of the typewriter on literature. "William Shakespeare didn't sit around pecking on a dirty, damned, ninety-five-dollar dohicky," he wrote, "and Joe Gould doesn't, either." In his essay on insanity he wrote, "I suffer from a mild form of insanity. I have delusions of grandeur. I believe myself to be Joe Gould."

The Oral History is almost as discursive as *Tristram Shandy*. In one chapter, "The Good Men Are Dying Like Flies," Gould begins a biography of a diner proprietor and horse-race gambler named Side-Bet Benny Altschuler, who stuck a rusty ice-pick in his hand and died of lockjaw; and skips after a few paragraphs to a story a seaman told him about seeing a group of tippy lepers on a beach in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad; and goes from that to an anecdote about a meeting held in Boston in 1915 to protest against the showing of "The Birth of a Nation," at which he kicked a policeman; and goes from that to a description of a trip he once made through the Central Islip insane asylum, in the course of which a woman pointed at him and screamed, "There he is! Thief! Thief! There's the man that picked my geraniums and stole my mama's mule and buggy"; and goes from that to an account an old stumblebum gave of glimpsing and



## Twentieth Century Blues

feeling the blue-black flames of hell one night while sitting in a doorway on Great Jones Street and of seeing two mermaids playing in the East River just north of Fulton Fish Market later the same night; and goes from that to an explanation made by a priest of old St. Patrick's Cathedral on Mott Street of why Italian women are addicted to the wearing of black; and then returns at last to Side-Bet Benny, the lock-jawed diner proprietor.

Only a few of the hundreds of people who know Gould have read any of the Oral History, and most of them take it for granted that it is gibberish. Those who make the attempt usually bog down after a couple of chapters and give up. Gould says he can count on his hands and feet those who have read enough of it to be qualified to form an opinion. One is Horace Gregory, the poet and critic. "I look upon Gould as a sort of Samuel Pepys of the Bowery," Gregory says. "I once waded through twenty-odd composition books, and most of what I saw had the quality of a competent high-school theme, but some of it was written with the clear and wonderful veracity of a child, and here and there were flashes of hardbitten Yankee wit. If someone took the trouble to go through it and separate the good from the rubbish, as editors did with Thomas Wolfe's millions of words, it might be discovered that Gould actually has written a masterpiece. I can't imagine anyone with patience enough to tackle the job. It would require months and months, maybe years." Another is E. E. Cummings, the poet, who is a close friend of Gould's. Cummings once wrote a poem about Gould, No. 261 in his "Collected Poems," which contains the following description of the history:

... a myth is as good as a smile but little  
joe gould's quote oral  
history unquote might (publishers note) be  
entitled a wraith's  
progress or mainly awash while chiefly sub-  
merged or an amoral  
morality sort-of-aliveing by innumerable  
kind-of-deaths

Throughout the nineteen-twenties Gould haunted the office of *The Dial*, now dead, the most highbrow magazine of the time. Finally, in its April, 1929, issue, *The Dial* printed one of his shorter essays, "Civilization." In it he rambled along, referring to skyscrapers and steamships as "needless bric-a-brac," and remarking that "the auto is unnecessary. If all the perverted ingenuity which was put into making buzz-wagons had only gone into improving the breed of horses humanity would be better off." This essay had a curious effect on American literature. A copy of this issue of *The Dial* turned up three or four months later in a second-hand bookstore in Fresno, California, and was bought for a dime by William Saroyan, who then was twenty and floundering around, desperate to become a writer. He read Gould's essay and was deeply impressed and influenced by it. "It freed me from bothering about form," he says. Twelve years later, in the winter of 1941, in Don Freeman's studio on Columbus Circle, Saroyan saw some drawings Freeman had made of Gould for *Don Freeman's Newsstand*, a quarterly publication of pictures of odd New York scenes and personalities put out by the Associated American Artists. Saroyan became excited. He told Freeman about his indebtedness to Gould. "Who the hell is he, anyway?" Saroyan asked. "I've been trying to find out for years. Reading those few pages in *The Dial* was like going in the wrong direction and run-

ning into the right guy and then never seeing him again." Freeman told him about the Oral History. Saroyan sat down and wrote a commentary to accompany the drawings of Gould in *Newsstand*. "To this day," he wrote, in part, "I have not read anything else by Joe Gould. And yet to me he remains one of the few genuine and original American writers. He was easy and uncluttered, and almost all other American writing was uneasy and cluttered. It was not at home anywhere; it was trying too hard; it was miserable; it was a little sickly; it was literary; and it couldn't say anything simply. All other American writing was trying to get into one form or another, and no writer except Joe Gould seemed to understand that if the worst came to the worst you didn't need any form at all. All you had to do was say it." Not long after this issue of *Newsstand* came out, someone stopped Gould on Eighth Street and showed him Saroyan's endorsement of his work. Gould shrugged his shoulders. He had been on a spree and had lost his false teeth, and at the moment he was uninterested in literary matters. After thinking it over, however, he decided to call on Saroyan and ask him for help in getting some teeth. He found out somehow that Saroyan was living at the Hampshire House, on Central Park South. The doorman there followed Gould into the lobby and asked him what he wanted. Gould told him. "Do you know Mr. Saroyan?" the doorman asked. "Why, no," Gould said, "but that's all right. He's a disciple of mine." "What do you mean, disciple?" asked the doorman. "I mean," said Gould, "that he's a literary disciple of mine. I want to ask him to buy me some store teeth." "Come this way," said the doorman, gripping Gould's arm and ushering him to the

street. Later Freeman arranged a meeting, and the pair spent several evenings together in bars. "Saroyan kept saying he wanted to hear all about the Oral History," Gould says, "but I never got a chance to tell him. He did all the talking. I couldn't get a word in edgewise."

Gould, ever since his childhood, has been perplexed by his own personality. There are scores of autobiographical essays in the Oral History, and he says that all of them are attempts to explain himself to himself. In one, "Why I Am Unable To Adjust Myself To Civilization, Such As It Is, or Do, Don't, Do, Don't, A Hell Of A Note," he came to the conclusion that his shyness was responsible for everything. "I am introvert and extrovert all rolled in one," he wrote, "a warring mixture of the recluse and the Sixth Avenue auctioneer. One foot says do, the other says don't. One foot says shut your mouth, the other says bellow like a bull. I am painfully shy, but try not to let people know it. They would take advantage of me." Gould keeps his shyness well hidden. It is evident only when he is cold sober. In that state he is silent, suspicious, and constrained, but a couple of beers or a single jigger of gin will untie his tongue and put a leer on his face. He is extraordinarily responsive to alcohol. "On a hot night," he says, "I can walk up and down in front of a gin mill for ten minutes, breathing real deep, and get a jag on."

Even though Gould requires only a few drinks, getting them is sometimes quite a task. Most evenings he prowls around the saloons and dives on the west side of the Village, on the lookout for curiosity-seeking tourists from whom he can cadge beers, sandwiches, and small sums of money. Such people are scarce nowadays. If he is unable to find anyone approach-

## *Twentieth Century Blues*

able in the tumultuous saloons around Sheridan Square, he goes over to Sixth Avenue and works north, hitting the Jericho Tavern, the Village Square Bar & Grill, the Belmar, Goody's, and the Rochambeau. He has a routine. He doesn't enter a place unless it is crowded. After he is in, he bustles over to the telephone booth and pretends to look up a number. While doing this, he scrutinizes the customers. If he sees a prospect, he goes over and says, "Let me introduce myself. The name is Joseph Ferdinand Gould, graduate of Harvard, *magna cum diffcultate*, class of 1911, and chairman of the board of Weal and Woe, Incorporated. In exchange for a drink, I'll recite a poem, deliver a lecture, argue a point, or take off my shoes and imitate a sea gull. I prefer gin, but beer will do." Gould is by no means a bum. He feels that the entertainment he provides is well worth whatever he is able to cadge. He doesn't fawn, and he is never grateful. If he is turned down politely, he shrugs his shoulders and leaves the place. However, if the prospect passes a remark like "Get out of here, you bum," Gould turns on him, no matter how big he is, and gives him a frightening tongue-lashing. He is skilled in the use of the obscene epithet; he can curse for ten minutes, growing more shrill and scurrilous by the minute, without repeating himself. When aroused, he is fearless. He will drop his portfolio, put up his fists, and offer to fight men who could kill him with one halfhearted blow. If he doesn't find an audience on the trip up Sixth, he turns west on Eleventh and heads for the Village Vanguard, in a cellar on Seventh Avenue South. The Vanguard was once a sleazy rendezvous for arty people, but currently it is a thriving night club. Gould and the proprietor, a man named Max

Gordon, have known each other for many years and are on fairly good terms much of the time. Gould always hits the Vanguard last. He is sure of it, and he keeps it in reserve. Since it became prosperous, the place annoys him. He goes down the stairs and says, "Hello, Max, you dirty capitalist. I want a bite to eat and a beer. If I don't get it, I'll walk right out on the dance floor and throw a fit." "Go argue with the cook," Gordon tells him. Gould goes into the kitchen, eats whatever the cook gives him, drinks a couple of beers, fills a bag with bread crumbs, and departs.

Despite his shyness, Gould has a great fondness for parties. He is acquainted with hundreds of artists, writers, sculptors, and actors in the Village, and whenever he learns that one of them is giving a party, he goes, friend or enemy, invited or not. Usually he keeps to himself for a while, uneasily smoking one cigarette after another and stiff as a board with tenseness. Sooner or later, however, impelled by a drink or two and by the desperation of the ill at ease, he begins to throw his weight around. He picks out the prettiest woman in the room, goes over, bows, and kisses her hand. He tells discreditable stories about himself. He becomes exuberant; suddenly, for no reason at all, he cackles with pleasure and jumps up and clicks his heels together. Presently he shouts, "All in favor of a one-man floor show, please say 'Aye!'" If he gets the slightest encouragement, he strips to the waist and does a hand-clapping, foot-stamping dance which he says he learned on a Chippewa reservation in North Dakota and which he calls the Joseph Ferdinand Gould Stomp. While dancing, he chants an old Salvation Army song, "There Are Flies on Me, There Are Flies on You, but There Are No Flies on Jesus."

## *Professor Sea Gull*

Then he imitates a sea gull. He pulls off his shoes and socks and takes awkward, headlong skips about the room, flapping his arms and letting out a piercing caw with every skip. As a child he had several pet gulls, and he still spends many Sundays on the end of a fishing pier at Sheepsh-head Bay observing gulls; he claims he has such a thorough understanding of their cawing that he can translate poetry into it. "I have translated a number of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's poems into sea gull," he says.

Inevitably, at every party Gould goes to, he gets up on a table and delivers some lectures. His lectures are brief, but he gives them lengthy titles, such as "Drunk as a Skunk, or How I Measured the Heads of Fifteen Hundred Indians in Zero Weather" and "The Dread Tomato Habit, or Watch Out! Watch Out! Down with Dr. Gallup!" For a reason he has never been able to make quite clear, statistics of any kind infuriate him. In the latter lecture, using statistics he maintains he has found in newspaper financial sections, he proves that the eating of tomatoes by railroad engineers was responsible for fifty-three per cent of the train wrecks in the United States during the last seven years. When Gould arrives at a party, people who have never seen him before usually take one look, snicker, and edge away. Before the evening is over, however, a few of them almost always develop a kind of puzzled respect for him; they get him in a corner, ask him questions, and try to determine what is wrong with him. Gould enjoys this. "When you came over and kissed my hand," a young woman told him once, "I said to myself, 'What a nice old gentleman.' A minute later I looked around and you were bouncing up and down with your shirt off, imitating a wild

Indian. I was shocked. Why do you have to be such an exhibitionist?" "Madam," Gould said, "it is the duty of the bohemian to make a spectacle of himself. If my informality leads you to believe that I'm a rum-dumb, or that I belong in Bellevue, hold fast to that belief, hold fast, hold fast, and show your ignorance."

Gould is not particularly communicative about what he calls his pre-Oral History life. "I am the most recent black sheep in a family that can trace its ancestry right spang to William the Conqueror," he says. He is a native of Norwood, Massachusetts, a southwestern suburb of Boston. He comes from a family of physicians. His grandfather, Joseph Ferdinand Gould, for whom he was named, taught in the Harvard Medical School and had a practice in South Boston. His father, Clark Storer Gould, was a captain in the Army Medical Corps and died of blood poisoning in a camp in Ohio during the last war. The family was well-to-do until Gould was in his late teens, when his father invested unwisely in the stock of an Alaska land company. Gould says he went to Harvard only because it was a family custom. "I did not want to go," he wrote in one of his autobiographical essays. "It had been my plan to stay home and sit in a rocking chair on the back porch and brood." He says that he was an undistinguished student. Some of his classmates were Conrad Aiken, the poet; Howard Lindsay, the playwright and actor; Gluyas Williams, the cartoonist; and Richard F. Whitney, former president of the New York Stock Exchange. His best friends were three foreign students—a Chinese, a Siamese, and an Albanian.

Gould's mother had always taken it for granted that he would become a physician, but after getting his A.B. he told

her he was through with formal education. She asked him what he intended to do. "I intend to stroll and ponder," he said. He passed most of the next three years strolling and pondering on the ranch of an uncle in Canada. In 1913, in an Albanian restaurant in Boston named the Scanderbeg, whose coffee he liked, he became acquainted with Theofan S. Noli, an archimandrite of the Albanian Orthodox Church, who interested him in Balkan politics. In February, 1914, Gould startled his family by announcing that he planned to devote the rest of his life to collecting funds to free Albania. He founded an organization in Boston called the Friends of Albanian Independence, enrolled a score or so of dues-paying members, and began telegraphing and calling on bewildered newspaper editors in Boston and Manhattan, trying to persuade them to print long treatises on Albanian affairs written by Noli. After about eight months of this, Gould was sitting in the Scanderbeg one night, drinking coffee and listening to a group of Albanian factory workers argue in their native tongue about Balkan politics, when he suddenly came to the conclusion that he was about to have a nervous breakdown. "I began to twitch uncontrollably and see double," he says. From that night on his interest in Albania slackened.

After another period of strolling and pondering, Gould took up eugenics. He has forgotten exactly how this came about. In any case, he spent the summer of 1915 as a student in eugenical field work at the Eugenics Record Office at Cold Spring Harbor. This organization, endowed by the Carnegie Institution, was engaged at that time in making studies of families of hereditary defectives, paupers, and town nuisances in several highly inbred com-

munities. Such people were too prosaic for Gould; he decided to specialize in Indians. That winter he went out to North Dakota and measured the heads of a thousand Chippewas on the Turtle Mountain Reservation and of five hundred Mandans on the Fort Berthold Reservation. Nowadays, when Gould is asked why he took these measurements, he changes the subject, saying, "The whole matter is a deep, scientific secret." He was happy in North Dakota. "It was the most rewarding period of my life," he says. "I'm a good horseman, if I do say so myself, and I like to dance and whoop, and the Indians seemed to enjoy having me around. I was afraid they'd think I was batty when I asked for permission to measure their noggins, but they didn't mind. It seemed to amuse them. Indians are the only true aristocrats I've ever known; nothing in God's world ever surprises them. They ought to run the country, and we ought to be put on the reservations." After seven months of reservation life, Gould ran out of money. He returned to Massachusetts and tried vainly to get funds for another head-measuring expedition. "At this juncture in my life," he says, "I decided to engage in literary work." He came to Manhattan and got a job as assistant Police Headquarters reporter for the *Evening Mail*. One morning in the summer of 1917, after he had been a reporter for about a year, he was basking in the sun on the back steps of Headquarters, trying to overcome a grappa hangover, when the idea for the Oral History blossomed in his mind. He promptly quit his job and began writing. "Since that fateful morning," he once said, in a moment of exaltation, "the Oral History has been my rope and my scaffold, my bed and my board, my wife and my floozy, my wound and the salt on it, my whiskey

and my aspirin, and my rock and my salvation. It is the only thing that matters a damn to me. All else is dross."

Gould says that he rarely has more than a dollar at any one time, and that he doesn't particularly care. "As a rule," he says, "I despise money." However, there is a widely held belief in the Village that he is rich and that he receives an income from inherited property in New England. "Only an old millionaire could afford to go around as shabby as you," a bartender told him recently. "You're one of those fellows that die in doorways and when the cops search them their pockets are just busting with bankbooks. If you wanted to, I bet you could step over to the West Side Savings Bank right this minute and draw out twenty thousand dollars." After the death of his mother in 1939, Gould did come into some money. Close friends of his say that it was less than a thousand dollars and that he spent it in less than a month, wildly buying drinks all over the Village for people he had never seen before. "He seemed miserable with money in his pockets," Gordon, the proprietor of the Vanguard, says. "When it was all gone, it seemed to take a load off his mind." While Gould was spending his inheritance, he did one thing that satisfied him deeply. He bought a big, shiny radio and took it out on Sixth Avenue and kicked it to pieces. He has a low opinion of radio. "Five minutes of the idiot's babble that comes out of those machines," he says, "would turn the stomach of a goat."

During the twenties and the early thirties Gould occasionally interrupted his work on the Oral History to pose for classes at the Art Students' League and to do book-reviewing for newspapers and magazines. He says there were periods

when he lived comfortably on the money he earned this way. Burton Rascoe, literary editor of the old *Tribune*, gave him a lot of work. In a notation in "A Bookman's Daybook," Rascoe told of an experience with Gould. "I once gave him a small book about the American Indians to review," Rascoe wrote, "and he brought me back enough manuscript to fill three complete editions of the Sunday *Tribune*. I especially honor him, because, unlike most reviewers, he has never dogged me with inquiries as to why I never ran it. He had his say, which was considerable, about the book, the author, and the subject, and there, for him, the matter ended." Gould says that he quit book-reviewing because he felt that it was beneath his dignity to compete with machines. "The Sunday *Times* and the Sunday *Herald Tribune* have machines that review books," he says. "You put a book in one of those machines and jerk down a couple of levers and a review drops out." In recent years Gould has got along on less than five dollars in actual money a week. He has a number of friends—Malcolm Cowley, the writer and editor; Aaron Siskind, the documentary photographer; Cummings, the poet; and Gordon, the night-club proprietor, are a few—who give him small sums of money regularly. No matter what they think of the Oral History, all these people greatly respect Gould's doggedness. . . .

Gould's opinion of contemporary writing other than the Oral History is low. Occasionally, at the Public Library, he takes out a recently published history and sits down with it at his favorite table in the genealogy room. Almost immediately he begins to grunt and groan and curse the author. "The hell you say," he is apt to exclaim, smacking the book with his palm and startling the other people at the

## Twentieth Century Blues

table. "Who told you? It simply isn't true! Garbage, garbage, ten tons of garbage! And they saw down beautiful trees to make paper to print this stuff on! The awful waste! Oh! Oh! I just can't endure it!"

Gould's outspokenness has made him a lone wolf in the Village; he has never been allowed to join any of the art, poetry, or ism organizations. He has been trying for ten years to join the Raven Poetry Circle, which puts on the poetry exhibition in Washington Square each summer and is the most powerful organization of its kind in the Village, but he has been blackballed every time. However, the Ravens usually let him attend their readings. Francis Lambert McCrudden, a retired Telephone Company employee who is the head Raven, claims that Gould is not serious about poetry. "We serve wine at our readings, and that is the only reason Mr. Gould attends," he once said. "He sometimes insists on reading foolish poems of his own, and it gets on your nerves. At our religious-poetry night he demanded permission to recite a poem entitled 'My

Religion.' I told him to go ahead, and this is what he recited:

In winter I'm a Buddhist,  
And in summer I'm a nudist.

And at our nature-poetry night he begged to recite a poem entitled 'The Sea Gull.' I gave him permission, and he jumped out of his chair and began to wave his arms and leap about and scream, 'Scree-eeek! Scree-eeek!' It was upsetting. We are serious poets and we don't appreciate that sort of behavior." Last summer Gould picketed the Raven exhibition, which was held on the fence of a tennis court on Washington Square South. In one hand he carried his portfolio and in the other he held a placard on which he had printed: "JOSEPH FERDINAND GOULD, HOT SHOT POET FROM POETVILLE, A REFUGEE FROM THE RAVENS. POETS OF THE WORLD, IGNITE! YOU HAVE NOTHING TO LOSE BUT YOUR BRAINS!" Now and then, as he strutted back and forth, he would take a leap and then a skip and say to passers-by, "Would you like to hear what Joe Gould thinks of the world and all that's in it? Scree-eeek! Scree-eeek!"

## AMERICAN RHAPSODY (4)

by KENNETH FEARING

First you bite your fingernails. And then you comb your hair again. And then you wait. And wait.

(They say, you know, that first you lie. And then you steal, they say. And then, they say, you kill.)

Then the doorbell rings. Then Peg drops in. And Bill. And Jane. And Doc. And first you talk, and smoke, and hear the news and have a drink. Then you walk down the stairs.

From Kenneth Fearing, *Collected Poems*. Copyright, 1940, by Random House, Inc. Reprinted by permission of Random House, Inc. Originally appeared in *The New Yorker*.

### *Readings, Forecasts, Personal Guidance*

And you dine, then, and go to a show after that, perhaps, and after that a night spot, and after that come home again, and climb the stairs again, and again go to bed.

But first Peg argues, and Doc replies. First you dance the same dance and you drink the same drink you always drank before.

And the piano builds a roof of notes above the world.

And the trumpet weaves a dome of music through space. And the drum makes a ceiling over space and time and night.

And then the table-wit. And then the check. Then home again to bed.

But first, the stairs

And do you now, baby, as you climb the stairs, do you still feel as you felt back there?

Do you feel again as you felt this morning? And the night before? And then the night before that?

(They say, you know, that first you hear voices. And then you have visions, they say. Then, they say, you kick and scream and rave.)

Or do you feel: What is one more night in a lifetime of nights?

What is one more death, or friendship, or divorce out of two, or three? Or four?

Or five?

One more face among so many, many faces, one more life among so many million lives?

But first, baby, as you climb and count the stairs (and they total the same) did you, sometime or somewhere, have a different idea?

Is this, baby, what you were born to feel, and do, and be?

## READINGS, FORECASTS, PERSONAL GUIDANCE

*by* KENNETH FEARING

It is not—I swear by every fiery omen to be seen these nights in every quarter of the heavens, I affirm it by all the monstrous portents of the earth and of the sea—

It is not that my belief in the true and mystic science is shaken, nor that I have lost faith in the magic of the cards, or in the augury of dreams, or in the great and good divinity of the stars.

No, I know still whose science fits the promise to the inquirer's need, invariably, for a change: Mine. My science foretells the wished-for journey, the business adjustment, the handsome stranger. (Each of these is considered a decided change.)

From Kenneth Fearing, *Collected Poems*. Copyright, 1940, by Random House, Inc. Reprinted by permission of Random House, Inc. Originally appeared in *The New Yorker*.



## *Twentieth Century Blues*

And I know whose skill weighs matrimony, risks a flyer in steel or wheat against the vagaries of the moon.

(Planet of dreams, of mothers and of children, goddess of sailors and of all adventurers, forgive the liberty. But a man must eat.) My skill,

Mine, and the cunning and the patience. (Two dollars for the horoscope in brief and five for a twelve months' forecast in detail.)

No, it is this: The wonders that I have seen with my own eyes.

It is this: That still these people know, as I do not, that what has never been on earth before may still well come to pass,

That always, always there are new and brighter things beneath the sun,

That surely, in bargain basements or in walk-up flats, it must be so that still from time to time they hear wild angel voices speak.

It is this: That I have known them for what they are,

Seen thievery written plainly in their planets, found greed and murder and worse in their birth dates and their numbers, guilt etched in every line of every palm,

But still a light burns through the eyes they turn to me, a need more moving than the damned and dirty dollars (which I must take) that form the pattern of their larger hopes and deeper fears.

And it comes to this: That always I feel another hand, not mine, has drawn and turned the card to find some incredible ace,

Always another word I did not write appears in the spirit parchment prepared by me,

Always another face I do not know shows in the dream, the crystal globe, or the flame.

And finally, this: Corrupt, in a world bankrupt and corrupt, what have I got to do with these miracles?

If they want miracles, let them consult some one else.

Would they, in extremity, ask them of a physician? Or expect them, in desperation, of an attorney? Or of a priest? Or of a poet?

Nevertheless, a man must eat.

Mrs. Raeburn is expected at five. She will communicate with a number of friends and relatives long deceased.

## DEVIL'S DREAM

by KENNETH FEARING

But it could never be true;  
How could it ever happen, if it never did before, and it's not so now?

But suppose that the face behind those steel prison bars—  
Why do you dream about a face lying cold in the trenches streaked with rain and  
dirt and blood?  
Is it the very same face seen so often in the mirror?  
Just as though it could be true—

But what if it is, what if it is, what if it is, what if the thing that cannot happen  
really happens just the same,  
Suppose the fever goes a hundred, then a hundred and one,  
What if Holy Savings Trust goes from 98 to 88 to 78 to 68, then drops down to  
28 and 8 and out of sight,  
And the fever shoots a hundred two, a hundred three, a hundred four, then a hundred  
five and out?

But now there's only the wind and the sky and sunlight and the clouds,  
With everyday people walking and talking as they always have before along the  
everyday street,  
Doing ordinary things with ordinary faces and ordinary voices in the ordinary way,  
Just as they always will—

Then why does it feel like a bomb, why does it feel like a target,  
Like standing on the gallows with the trap about to drop,  
Why does it feel like a thunderbolt the second before it strikes, why does it feel  
like a tight-rope walk high over hell?

Because it is not, will not, never could be true  
That the whole wide, bright, green, warm, calm world goes:  
CRASH.

From Kenneth Fearing, *Collected Poems*. Copyright, 1949, by Random House, Inc. Reprinted  
by permission of Random House, Inc.



*By permission of The Saturday Review of Literature*

*Michael Lenson's study for the painting "Bikini,"  
symbolizing the horror of atomic war.*

# THE FALL OF THE CITY

## *A Verse Play for Radio*

by ARCHIBALD MACLEISH

VOICE OF THE STUDIO DIRECTOR [*orotund and professional*]

Ladies and gentlemen:

This broadcast comes to you from the city  
Listeners over the curving air have heard  
From furthest-off frontiers, of foreign  
hours—

Mountain Time: Ocean Time: of the  
islands:

Of waters after the islands—some of them  
waking

Where noon here is the night there: some  
Where noon is the first few stars they see  
or the last one.

For three days the world has watched this  
city—

Not for the common occasions of brutal  
crime

Or the usual violence of one sort or an-  
other

Or coronations of kings or popular festi-  
vals:

No: for stranger and disturbing rea-  
sons—

The resurrection from death and the tomb  
of a dead woman.

Each day for three days there has come  
To the door of her tomb at noon a woman  
buried!

The terror that stands at the shoulder of  
our time

Touches the cheek with this: the flesh  
winces.

*The Fall of the City, A Verse Play for Radio*, copyright, 1937, and reprinted by permission of  
Rinehart & Company, Inc., publishers.

There have been other omens in other  
cities

But never of this sort and never so cred-  
ible.

In a time like ours seemings and portents  
signify.

Ours is a generation when dogs howl and  
the

Skin crawls on the skull with its beast's  
foreboding.

All men now alive with us have feared.

We have smelled the wind in the street  
that changes weather.

We have seen the familiar room grow un-  
familiar:

The order of numbers alter: the expecta-  
tion

Cheat the expectant eye. The appearance  
defaults with us.

Here in this city the wall of the time  
cracks.

We take you now to the great square of  
this city.

[*The shuffle and hum of a vast, pa-  
tient crowd gradually rises: swells:  
fills the background.*]

VOICE OF THE ANNOUNCER [*matter-of-  
fact*]

We are here on the central plaza.

We are well off to the eastward edge.

## Twentieth Century Blues

There is a kind of terrace over the crowd  
here.

It is precisely four minutes to twelve.

The crowd is enormous: there might be  
ten thousand:

There might be more: the whole square  
is faces.

Opposite over the roofs are the mountains.

It is quite clear: there are birds circling.

We think they are kites by the look: they  
are very high. . . .

The tomb is off to the right somewhere—

We can't see for the great crowd.

Close to us here are the cabinet ministers:

They stand on a raised platform with  
awnings.

The farmers' wives are squatting on the  
stones:

Their children have fallen asleep on their  
shoulders.

The heat is harsh: the light dazzles like  
metal.

It dazes the air as the clang of a gong  
does. . . .

News travels in this nation:

There are people here from away off—

Horse-raisers out of the country with  
brooks in it:

Herders of cattle from up where the snow  
stays—

The kind that cook for themselves mostly:

They look at the girls with their eyes hard

And a hard grin and their teeth show-  
ing. . . .

It is one minute to twelve now:

There is still no sign: they are still wait-  
ing:

No one doubts that she will come:

No one doubts that she will speak too:

Three times she has not spoken.

[*The murmur of the crowd changes—not  
louder but more intense: higher.*]

THE VOICE OF THE ANNOUNCER [*low  
but with increasing excitement*]

Now it is twelve: now they are rising:

Now the whole plaza is rising:

Fathers are lifting their small children:

The plumed fans on the platform are mo-  
tionless. . . .

There is no sound but the shuffle of shoe  
leather. . . .

Now even the shoes are still. . . .

We can hear the hawks: it is quiet as that  
now. . . .

It is strange to see such throngs so si-  
lent. . . .

Nothing yet: nothing has happened. . . .

Wait! There's a stir here to the right of us:  
They're turning their heads: the crowd  
turns:

The cabinet ministers lean from their bal-  
cony:

There's no sound: only the turning. . . .

[*A woman's voice comes over the silence  
of the crowd: it is a weak voice, but pene-  
trating: it speaks slowly and as though  
with difficulty.*]

THE VOICE OF THE DEAD WOMAN

First the waters rose with no wind. . . .

THE VOICE OF THE ANNOUNCER [*whis-  
pering*]

Listen: that is she! She's speaking!

THE VOICE OF THE DEAD WOMAN

Then the stones of the temple kindled

Without flame or tinder of maize-  
leaves. . . .

## *The Fall of the City*

THE VOICE OF THE ANNOUNCER [*whispering*]

They see her beyond us: The crowd sees her. . . .

THE VOICE OF THE DEAD WOMAN

Then there were cries in the night haze:  
Words in a once-heard tongue: the air  
Rustling above us as at dawn with herons.

Now it is I who must bring fear:  
I who am four days dead: the tears  
Still unshed for me—all of them: I  
For whom a child still calls at nightfall.

Death is young in me to fear!  
My dress is kept still in the press in my  
bedchamber:  
No one has broken the dish of the dead  
woman.

Nevertheless I must speak painfully:  
I am to stand here in the sun and speak:

[*There is a pause. Then her voice comes  
again loud, mechanical, speaking as  
by rote.*]

The city of masterless men  
Will take a master.  
There will be shouting then:  
Blood after!

[*The crowd stirs. Her voice goes on weak  
and slow as before.*]

Do not ask what it means: I do not know:  
Only sorrow and no hope for it.

THE VOICE OF THE ANNOUNCER

She has gone. . . . No, they are still  
looking.

THE VOICE OF THE DEAD WOMAN

It is hard to return from the time past.  
I have come

In the dream we must learn to dream  
where the crumbling of  
Time like the ash from a burnt string has  
Stopped for me. For you the thread still  
burns:

You take the feathery ash upon your  
fingers.

You bring yourselves from the time past  
as it pleases you.

It is hard to return to the old nearness . . .

Harder to go again. . . .

THE VOICE OF THE ANNOUNCER

She is gone.

We know because the crowd is closing.  
All we can see is the crowd closing.  
We hear the releasing of held breath—  
The weight shifting: the lifting of shoe  
leather.

The stillness is broken as surface of water  
is broken—

The sound circling from in outward.

[*The murmur of the crowd rises.*]

Small wonder they feel fear.  
Before the murders of the famous kings—  
Before imperial cities burned and fell—  
The dead were said to show themselves  
and speak.

When dead men came disaster came. Pre-  
sentiments

That let the living on their beds sleep on  
Woke dead men out of death and gave  
them voices.

All ancient men in every nation knew  
this.

A VOICE OVER THE CROWD

Masterless men . . .

A VOICE OVER THE CROWD

When shall it be . . .

## Twentieth Century Blues

A VOICE OVER THE CROWD  
Masterless men  
Will take a master . . .

A VOICE OVER THE CROWD  
What has she said to us . . .

A VOICE OVER THE CROWD  
When shall it be . . .

A VOICE OVER THE CROWD  
Masterless men  
Will take a master.  
Blood after . . .

A VOICE OVER THE CROWD  
What has she said to us . . .

VOICES TOGETHER  
Blood after!

*[The voices run together into the excited  
roar of the crowd. The Announcer's  
voice is loud over it.]*

THE VOICE OF THE ANNOUNCER  
They are milling around us like cattle  
that smell death.  
The whole square is whirling and turning  
and shouting.  
One of the ministers raises his arms on the  
platform.  
No one is listening: now they are sound-  
ing drums:  
Trying to quiet them likely: No! No!  
Something is happening: there in the far  
corner:  
A runner: a messenger: staggering: people  
are helping him:  
People are calling: he comes through the  
crowd: they are quieter.  
Only those on the far edge are still  
shouting:  
Listen! He's here by the ministers now!  
He is speaking. . . .

THE VOICE OF THE MESSENGER  
There has come the conqueror!  
I am to tell you.  
I have raced over sea land:  
I have run over cane land:  
I have climbed over cone land.  
It was laid on my shoulders  
By shall and by shan't  
That standing by day  
And staying by night  
Were not for my lot  
Till I came to the sight of you.  
Now I have come.

Be warned of this conqueror!  
This one is dangerous!  
Word has out-oared him.  
East over sea-cross has  
All taken—  
Every country.  
No men are free there.  
Ears overhear them.  
Their words are their murderers.  
Judged before judgment  
Tried after trial  
They die as do animals:—  
Offer their throats  
As the goat to her slaughterer.  
Terror has taught them this!

Now he is here!

He was violent in his vessel:  
He was steering in her stern:  
He was watching in her waist:  
He was peering in her prow:  
And he dragged her up  
Nine lengths  
Till her keel lodged  
On this nation.

Now he is here  
Waylaying and night-lying.  
If they hide before dark  
He comes before sunup.

## *The Fall of the City*

Where hunger is eaten  
There he sits down:  
Where fear sleeps  
There he arises.

I tell you beware of him!  
All doors are dangers.  
The warders of wealth  
Will admit him by stealth.  
The lovers of men  
Will invite him as friend.  
The drinkers of blood  
Will drum him in suddenly.  
Hope will unlatch to him:  
Hopelessness open.

I say and say truly  
To all men in honesty  
Such is this conqueror!  
Shame is his people.  
Lickers of spittle  
Their lives are unspeakable:  
Their dying indecent.

Be well warned!  
He comes to you slightly  
Slanting and sprinting  
Hinting and shadowing:  
Sly is his hiding:—  
A hard lot:  
A late rider:

Watch! I have said to you!

THE VOICE OF THE ANNOUNCER  
They are leading him out: his legs give:  
Now he is gone in the crowd: they are  
silent:  
No one has spoken since his speaking:

They stand still circling the ministers.  
No one has spoken or called out:—  
There is no stir at all nor movement:  
Even the farthest have stood patiently:

They wait trusting the old men:  
They wait faithfully trusting the answer.  
Now the huddle on the platform opens:  
A minister turns to them raising his two  
arms.

THE VOICE OF THE ORATOR  
Freemen of this nation!  
The persuasion of your wills against your  
wisdom is not dreamed of.  
We offer themes for your consideration.

What is the surest defender of liberty?  
Is it not liberty?  
A free people resists by freedom:  
Not locks! Not blockhouses!

The future is a mirror where the past  
Marches to meet itself. Go armed toward  
arms!  
Peaceful toward peace! Free and with  
music toward freedom!  
Face tomorrow with knives and tomor-  
row's a knife-blade.  
Murder your foe and your foe will be  
murder!—  
Even your friends suspected of false  
speaking:  
Hands on the door at night and the floor  
boards squeaking.

Those who win by the spear are the spear  
toters.  
And what do they win? Spears! What  
else is there?  
If their hands let go they have nothing  
to hold by.  
They are no more free than a paralytic  
propped against a tree is.

With the armored man the arm is upheld  
by the weapon:  
The man is worn by the knife.



## Twentieth Century Blues

Once depend on iron for your freedom  
and your  
Freedom's iron!

Once overcome your resisters with force  
and your

Force will resist you!—

You will never be free of force.

Never of arms unarmed

Will the father return home:

The lover to her loved:

The mature man to his fruit orchard

Walking at peace in that beauty—

The years of his trees to assure him.

Force is a greater enemy than this conqueror—

A treacherous weapon.

Nevertheless my friends there *is* a weapon!  
Weakness conquers!

Against chainlessness who breaks?

Against wall-lessness who vaults?

Against forcelessness who forces?

Against the feather of the thistle

Is blunted sharpest metal.

No edge cuts seed-fluff.

This conqueror unresisted

Will conquer no longer: a posturer

Beating his blows upon burdocks—

Shifting his guard against shadows.

Snickers will sound among road-menders:

Titters be stifled by laundresses:

Coarse guffaws among chambermaids.

Reddened with rage he will roar.

He will sweat in his uniform foolishly.

He will disappear: no one hear of him!

There *is* a weapon my friends.

Scorn conquers!

VOICE OF THE ANNOUNCER [*the Orator's*  
*voice unintelligible under it*]

I wish you could all see this as we do—

The whole plaza full of these people—

Their colorful garments—the harsh sunlight—

The water-sellers swinging enormous  
gourds—

The orator there on the stone platform—

The temple behind him: the high pyramid—

The hawks overhead in the sky teetering

Slow to the windward: swift to the downwind—

The houses blind with the blank sun on  
them. . . .

THE VOICE OF THE ORATOR

There is a weapon.

Reason and truth are that weapon.

Let this conqueror come!

Show him no hindrance!

Suffer his flag and his drum!

Words . . . win!

THE VOICE OF THE ANNOUNCER

There's the shout now: he's done:

He's climbing down: a great speech:

They're all smiling and pressing around  
him:

The women are squatting in full sunlight:

They're opening packages: bread we'd  
say by the look—

Yes: bread: bread wrapped between corn  
leaves:

They're squatting to eat: they're quite  
contented and happy:

Women are calling their men from the  
sunny stones:

There are flutes sounding away off:

We can't see for the shifting and moving—

## *The Fall of the City*

Yes: there are flutes in the cool shadow:  
Children are dancing in intricate figures.

[*A drum and flute are heard under the voice.*]

Even a few old men are dancing.  
You'd say they'd never feared to see them  
dancing.

A great speech! really great!  
Men forget these truths in passion:  
They oppose the oppressors with blind  
blows:  
They make of their towns tombs: of their  
roofs burials:  
They build memorial ruins to liberty:  
But liberty is not built from ruins:  
Only in peace is the work excellent. . . .

That's odd! The music has stopped.  
There's something—

It's a man there on the far side: he's pointing:

He seems to be pointing back through the  
farthest street:

The people are twisting and rising: bread  
in their fists. . .

We can't see what it is. . . . Wait! . . .  
it's a messenger.

It must be a messenger. Yes. It's a message  
—another.

Here he is at the turn of the street trotting:

His neck's back at the nape: he looks  
tired:

He winds through the crowd with his  
mouth open: laboring:

People are offering water: he pushes away  
from them:

Now he has come to the stone steps: to  
the ministers:

Stand by: we're edging in. . . .

[*There are sounds of people close by: coughs: murmurs. The Announcer's voice is lowered.*]

Listen: he's leaning on the stone: he's  
speaking.

THE VOICE OF THE MESSENGER  
There has come . . . the Conqueror. . . .

I am to tell you. . .

I have run over corn land:  
I have climbed over cone land:  
I have crossed over mountains.

It was laid on my shoulders  
By shall and by shan't  
That standing by day  
And staying by night  
Were not for my lot  
Till I came to the sight of you.

Now I have come.

I bear word:  
Beware of this conqueror!

The fame of his story  
Like flame in the winter grass  
Widens before him.  
Beached on our shore  
With the dawn over shoulder  
The lawns were still cold  
When he came to the sheep meadows:—  
Sun could not keep with him  
So was he forward.

Fame is his sword.

No man opposing him  
Still grows his glory.  
He needs neither foeman nor  
Thickset of blows to  
Gather his victories—

## Twentieth Century Blues

Nor a foe's match  
To earn him his battles.

He brings his own enemy!

He baggages with him  
His closet antagonist—  
His private opposer.  
He's setting him up  
At every road corner—  
A figure of horror  
With blood for his color:  
Fist for his hand:  
Reek where he stands:  
Hate for his heat:  
Sneers for his mouth:  
Clouts for his clothes:  
Oaths if he speak:—  
And he's knocking him down  
In every town square  
Till hair's on his blade  
And blood's all about  
Like dust in a drought  
And the people are shouting  
Flowers him flinging  
Music him singing  
And bringing him gold  
And holding his heels  
And feeling his thighs  
Till their eyes start  
And their hearts swell  
And they're telling his praises  
Like lays of the heroes  
And chiefs of antiquity.

Such are his victories!  
So does he come:  
So he approaches . . .

[*A whisper rustles through the crowd.*]

No man to conquer.  
Yet as a conqueror  
Marches he forward . . .

[*The whisper is louder.*]

Stands in your mountains . . .

[*A murmur of voices.*]

Soon to descend on you!

[*A swelling roar.*]

### THE VOICE OF THE ANNOUNCER

That touched them! That frightened  
them!

Some of them point to the east hills:  
Some of them mock at the ministers:  
"Freedom!"

"Freedom for what. To die in a rat trap?"  
They're frantic with anger and plain fear.  
They're sold out they say. You can hear  
them.

"Down with the government! Down with  
the orators!

"Down with liberal learned minds!

"Down with the mouths and the loose  
tongues in them!

"Down with the lazy lot! They've sold us!  
"We're sold out! Talking has done for  
us!" . . .

They're boiling around us like mullet that  
smell shark.

We can't move for the mob: they're crazy  
with terror . . .

### A LOUD VOICE [*distant*]

God-lovers!

Think of your gods!

Earth-masters!

Taste your disasters!

Men!

Remember!

## *The Fall of the City*

### THE VOICE OF THE ANNOUNCER

There's a voice over the crowd somewhere.  
They hear it: they're quieting down. . . .

It's the priests!

We see them now: it's the priests on the  
pyramid!

There might be ten of them: black with  
their hair tangled.

The smoke of their fire is flat in the quick  
wind:

They stand in the thick of the smoke by  
the stone of the victims:

Their knives catch in the steep sun: they  
are shouting:

Listen!—

### VOICES OF PRIESTS

Turn to your gods rememberers!

### A SINGLE VOICE

Let the world be saved by surrendering  
the world:

Not otherwise shall it be saved.

### VOICES OF PRIESTS

Turn to your gods rememberers!

### SINGLE VOICE

Let evil be overcome by the coming over  
of evil:

Your hearts shall be elsewhere.

### VOICES OF THE PRIESTS

Turn to your gods rememberers!

### VOICES OF THE PRIESTS [*antiphonally*]

Turn to your gods!

The conqueror cannot take you!

Turn to your gods!

The narrow dark will keep you!

Turn to your gods!

In god's house is no breaking!

Turn to your gods!

In god's silences sleep is!

Lay up your will with the gods!

Stones cannot still you!

Lay up your mind with the gods!

Blade cannot blind you!

Lay up your heart with the gods!

Danger departs from you!

### THE VOICE OF THE ANNOUNCER

It's a wonderful thing to see this crowd  
responding.

Even the simplest citizens feel the emo-  
tion.

There's hardly a sound now in the square.

It's wonderful:

Really impressive: the priests there on the  
pyramid:

The smoke blowing: the bright sun: the  
faces—

### A SINGLE VOICE

In the day of confusion of reason when  
all is delusion:

In the day of the tyrants of tongues when  
the truth is for hire:

In the day of deceit when ends meet:

Turn to your gods!

In the day of division of nations when  
hope is derision:

In the day of the supping of hate when  
the soul is corrupted:

In the day of despair when the heart's  
bare:

Turn to your gods!

[*A slow drum beat.*]

### THE VOICE OF THE ANNOUNCER

A kind of dance is beginning: a serpent  
of people:

## Twentieth Century Blues

A current of people coiling and curling  
through people:  
A circling of people through people like  
water through water . . .

CHANTING VOICES [*to the drums*]  
Out of the stir of the sun  
Out of the shout of the thunder  
Out of the hush of the star . . .  
Withdraw the heart.

THE VOICE OF THE ANNOUNCER [*The  
chant and drums under*]  
A very young girl is leading them:  
They have torn the shawl from her bare  
breast:  
They are giving her flowers: her mouth  
laughs:  
Her eyes are not laughing. . . .

CHANTING VOICES  
Leave now the lovely air  
To the sword and the sword-wearer—  
Leave to the marksman the mark—  
Withdraw the heart.

THE VOICE OF THE ANNOUNCER [*The  
chant and drums louder*]  
She's coming . . . the drums pound . . .  
the crowd  
Shrieks . . . she's reaching the temple  
. . . she's climbing it. . . .  
Others are following: five: ten . . .  
Hundreds are following . . . crowding  
the stairway. . . .  
She's almost there . . . her flowers have  
fallen. . . .  
She looks back . . . the priests are sur-  
• rounding her. . . .

[*The drums suddenly stop: there is an  
instant's silence: then an angry shout  
from the crowd.*]

THE VOICE OF THE ANNOUNCER  
Wait! Wait! Something has happened!  
One of the ministers: one of the oldest:  
The general: the one in the feathered  
coat:—  
He's driving them down with the staff of  
a banner:  
He's climbed after them driving them  
down:  
There's shouting and yelling enough but  
they're going:  
He's telling them off too: you can hear  
him—

A DEEP VOICE [*chatter of the crowd  
under it*]  
Men! Old men! Listen!  
Twist your necks on your nape bones!  
The knife will wait in the fist for you.

There is a time for everything—  
Time to be thinking of heaven:  
Time of your own skins!

Cock your eyes to the windward!

Do you see smoke on those mountains?  
The smoke is the smoke of towns.  
And who makes it? The conqueror!  
And where will he march now? Onward!  
The heel of the future descends on you!

THE VOICE OF THE ANNOUNCER  
He has them now: even the priests have  
seen it:  
They're all looking away here to the east.  
There's smoke too: filling the valleys: like  
thunderheads! . . .

THE VOICE OF THE GENERAL  
You are foolish old men.

You ought to be flogged for your foolish-  
ness.

## *The Fall of the City*

Your grandfathers died to be free  
And you—you juggle with freedom!  
Do you think you're free by a law  
Like the falling of apples in autumn?

You thought you were safe in your liberties!

You thought you could always quibble!  
You can't! You take my word for it.  
Freedom's the rarest bird!  
You risk your neck to snare it—  
It's gone while your eyeballs stare!

Those who'd lodge with a tyrant  
Thinking to feed at his fire  
And leave him again when they're fed are  
Plain fools or were bred to it—  
Brood of the servile races  
Born with the hang-dog face. . . .

THE VOICE OF THE ANNOUNCER  
They're all pointing and pushing together:  
The women are shouldering baskets:  
bread: children. . . .  
They smell smoke in the air: they smell  
terror. . . .

THE VOICE OF THE GENERAL [*louder  
over the increasing sound*]  
There's nothing in this world worse—  
Empty belly or purse or the  
Pitiful hunger of children—  
Than doing the Strong Man's will!

The free will fight for their freedom.  
They're free men first. They feed  
Meager or fat but as free men.  
Everything else comes after—  
Food: roof: craft—  
Even the sky and the light of it!

[*The voices of the crowd rise to a tumult  
of sounds—drums: shouts: cries.*]

THE VOICE OF THE ANNOUNCER  
The sun is yellow with smoke . . . the  
town's burning. . . .  
The war's at the broken bridge. . . .

THE VOICE OF THE GENERAL [*shouting*]  
You! Are you free? Will you fight?

There are still inches for fighting!

There is still a niche in the streets!

You can stand on the stairs and meet him!

You can hold in the dark of a hall!

You can die!

—or your children will crawl for it!

THE VOICE OF THE ANNOUNCER [*over  
the tumult*]  
They won't listen. They're shouting and  
screaming and circling.  
The square is full of deserters with more  
coming.  
Every street from the bridge is full of de-  
serters.  
They're rolling in with the smoke blowing  
behind them.  
The plaza's choked with the smoke and  
the struggling of stragglers.  
They're climbing the platform: driving  
the ministers: shouting—  
One speaks and another:

THE VOICES OF CITIZENS  
The city is doomed!  
There's no holding it!

Let the conqueror have it! It's his!

The age is his! It's his century!

## *Twentieth Century Blues*

Our institutions are obsolete.  
He marches a mile while we sit in a meeting.

Opinions and talk!  
Deliberative walks beneath the ivy and  
the creepers!

The age demands a made-up mind.  
The conqueror's mind is decided on everything.

His doubt comes after the deed or never.

He knows what he wants for his want's  
what he knows.

He's gone before they say he's going.  
He's come before you've barred your  
house.

He's one man: we are but thousands!  
Who can defend us from one man?

Bury your arms! Break your standards!  
Give him the town while the town stands!

THE VOICE OF THE ANNOUNCER  
They're throwing their arms away: their  
bows are in bonfires.  
The plaza is littered with torn plumes:  
spear handles. . . .

THE VOICES OF CITIZENS  
Masterless men! . . .

Masterless men  
Must take a master! . . .

Order must master us! . . .

Freedom's for fools:  
Force is the certainty!

Freedom has eaten our strength and corrupted  
our virtues!

Men must be ruled!

Fools must be mastered!

Rigor and fast  
Will restore us our dignity!

Chains will be liberty!

THE VOICE OF THE ANNOUNCER  
The last defenders are coming: they whirl  
from the streets like  
Wild leaves on a wind: the square scatters  
them.  
Now they are fewer—ten together or five:  
They come with their heads turned: their  
eyes back.

Now there are none. The street's empty  
—in shadow.  
The crowd is retreating—watching the  
empty street:  
The shouts die.

The voices are silent.

They're watching. . . .

They stand in the slant of the sunlight  
silent and watching.  
The silence after the drums echoes the  
drum beat.

Now there's a sound. They see him. They  
must see him!  
They're shading their eyes from the sun:  
there's a rustle of whispering:  
We can't see for the glare of it. . . . Yes!  
. . . . Yes! . . .

He's there in the end of the street in the  
shadow. We see him!  
He looks huge—a head taller than any-  
one:  
Broad as a brass door: a hard hero:

## *The Fall of the City*

Heavy of heel on the brick: clanking with  
metal:

The helm closed on his head: the eyeholes  
hollow.

He's coming! . . .

He's clear of the shadow! . . .

The sun takes him.

They cover their faces with fingers. They  
cower before him.

They fall: they sprawl on the stone. He's  
alone where he's walking.

He marches with rattle of metal. He tram-  
ples his shadow.

He mounts by the pyramid—stamps on  
the stairway—turns—

His arm rises— His visor is opening. . . .

*[There is an instant's breathless silence:  
then the Voice of the Announcer low  
—almost a whisper.]*

There's no one! . . .

There's no one at all! . . .

No one! . . .

The helmet is hollow!

The metal is empty! The armor is empty!  
I tell you

There's no one at all there: there's only  
the metal:

The barrel of metal: the bundle of armor.  
It's empty!

The push of a stiff pole at the nipple  
would topple it.

They don't see! They lie on the paving.  
They lie in the

Burnt spears: the ashes of arrows. They  
lie there. . . .

They don't see or they won't see. They  
are silent. . . .

The people invent their oppressors: they  
wish to believe in them.

They wish to be free of their freedom: re-  
leased from their liberty:—

The long labor of liberty ended!

They lie there!

*[There is a whisper of sound. The An-  
nouncer's voice is louder.]*

Look! It's his arm! It is rising! His arm's  
rising!

They're watching his arm as it rises. They  
stir. They cry.

They cry out. They are shouting. They're  
shouting with happiness.

Listen! They're shouting like troops in a  
victory. Listen—

"The city of masterless men has found a  
master!"

You'd say it was they were the conquer-  
ors: they that had conquered.

### A ROAR OF VOICES

The city of masterless men has found  
a master!

The city has fallen!

The city has fallen!

THE VOICE OF THE ANNOUNCER *[flat]*

The city has fallen. . . .



## EPISTLE TO BE LEFT IN THE EARTH

*by* ARCHIBALD MACLEISH

**. . . It is colder now**

there are many stars

we are drifting

## North by the Great Bear

the leaves are falling

## The water is stone in the scooped rocks

to southward

Red sun grey air

the crows are

## Slow on their crooked wings

the jays have left us

Long since we passed the flares of Orion

Each man believes in his heart he will die

## Many have written last thoughts and last letters

None know if our deaths are now or forever

None know if this wandering earth will be found

We lie down and the snow covers our garments

I pray you

you (if any open this writing)

Make in your mouths the words that were our names

I will tell you all we have learned

I will tell you everything

# The earth is round

there are springs under the orchards

## The loam cuts with a blunt knife

**beware of**

## Elms in thunder

the lights in the sky are stars

We think they do not see

we think also

The trees do not know nor the leaves of the grasses

hear us

## The birds too are ignorant

# Do not listen

**Do not stand at dark in the open windows**

The selection from Archibald MacLeish *Poems 1924-1933* is used by permission of the publishers, Houghton Mifflin Company.

### *The Machine Stops*

We before you have heard this  
  they are voices  
They are not words at all but the wind rising  
Also none among us has seen God  
( . . We have thought often  
The flaws of sun in the late and driving weather  
Pointed to one tree but it was not so)  
As for the nights I warn you the nights are dangerous  
The wind changes at night and the dreams come

It is very cold  
there are strange stars near Arcturus  
Voices are crying an unknown name in the sky

## THE MACHINE STOPS

by E. M. FORSTER

## PART I

## The Air-ship

IMAGINE, if you can, a small room, hexagonal in shape, like the cell of a bee. It is lighted neither by window nor by lamp, yet it is filled with a soft radiance. There are no apertures for ventilation, yet the air is fresh. There are no musical instruments, and yet, at the moment that my meditation opens, this room is throbbing with melodious sounds. An arm-chair is in the center, by its side a reading-desk—that is all the furniture. And in the arm-chair there sits a swaddled lump of flesh—a woman, about five feet high, with a face as white as a fungus. It is to her that the little room belongs.

An electric bell rang.

The woman touched a switch and the music was silent.

"I suppose I must see who it is," she

thought, and set her chair in motion. The chair, like the music, was worked by machinery, and it rolled her to the other side of the room, where the bell still rang importunately.

"Who is it?" she called. Her voice was irritable, for she had been interrupted often since the music began. She knew several thousand people; in certain directions human intercourse had advanced enormously.

But when she listened into the receiver, her white face wrinkled into smiles, and she said:

“Very well. Let us talk, I will isolate myself. I do not expect anything important will happen for the next five minutes—for I can give you fully five minutes, Kuno.

From *The Eternal Moment* by E. M. Forster. Copyright, 1928, by Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc.

## *Twentieth Century Blues*

Then I must deliver my lecture on 'Music during the Australian Period.'"

She touched the isolation knob, so that no one else could speak to her. Then she touched the lighting apparatus, and the little room was plunged into darkness.

"Be quick!" she called, her irritation returning. "Be quick, Kuno; here I am in the dark wasting my time."

But it was fully fifteen seconds before the round plate that she held in her hands began to glow. A faint blue light shot across it, darkening to purple, and presently she could see the image of her son, who lived on the other side of the earth, and he could see her.

"Kuno, how slow you are."

He smiled gravely.

"I really believe you enjoy dawdling."

"I have called you before, mother, but you were always busy or isolated. I have something particular to say."

"What is it, dearest boy? Be quick. Why could you not send it by pneumatic post?"

"Because I prefer saying such a thing. I want—"

"Well?"

"I want you to come and see me."

Vashti watched his face in the blue plate.

"But I can see you!" she exclaimed. "What more do you want?"

"I want to see you not through the Machine," said Kuno. "I want to speak to you not through the wearisome Machine."

"Oh, hush!" said his mother, vaguely shocked. "You mustn't say anything against the Machine."

"Why not?"

"One mustn't."

"You talk as if a god had made the Machine," cried the other. "I believe that you pray to it when you are unhappy. Men made it, do not forget that. Great men,

but men. The Machine is much, but it is not everything. I see something like you in this plate, but I do not see you. I hear something like you through this telephone, but I do not hear you. That is why I want you to come. Come and stop with me. Pay me a visit, so that we can meet face to face, and talk about the hopes that are in my mind."

She replied that she could scarcely spare the time for a visit.

"The air-ship barely takes two days to fly between me and you."

"I dislike air-ships."

"Why?"

"I dislike seeing the horrible brown earth, and the sea, and the stars when it is dark. I get no ideas in an air-ship."

"I do not get them anywhere else."

"What kind of ideas can the air give you?"

He paused for an instant.

"Do you not know four big stars that form an oblong, and three stars close together in the middle of the oblong, and hanging from these stars, three other stars?"

"No, I do not. I dislike the stars. But did they give you an idea? How interesting; tell me."

"I had an idea that they were like a man."

"I do not understand."

"The four big stars are the man's shoulders and his knees. The three stars in the middle are like the belts that men wore once, and the three stars hanging are like a sword."

"A sword?"

"Men carried swords about with them, to kill animals and other men."

"It does not strike me as a very good idea, but it is certainly original. When did it come to you first?"

## *The Machine Stops*

"In the air-ship—" He broke off, and she fancied that he looked sad. She could not be sure, for the Machine did not transmit *nuances* of expression. It only gave a general idea of people—an idea that was good enough for all practical purposes, Vashti thought. The imponderable bloom, declared by a discredited philosophy to be the actual essence of intercourse, was rightly ignored by the Machine, just as the imponderable bloom of the grape was ignored by the manufacturers of artificial fruit. Something "good enough" had long since been accepted by our race.

"The truth is," he continued, "that I want to see these stars again. They are curious stars. I want to see them not from the air-ship, but from the surface of the earth, as our ancestors did, thousands of years ago. I want to visit the surface of the earth."

She was shocked again.

"Mother, you must come, if only to explain to me what is the harm of visiting the surface of the earth."

"No harm," she replied, controlling herself. "But no advantage. The surface of the earth is only dust and mud, no life remains on it, and you would need a respirator, or the cold of the outer air would kill you. One dies immediately in the outer air."

"I know; of course I shall take all precautions."

"And besides—"

"Well?"

She considered, and chose her words with care. Her son had a queer temper, and she wished to dissuade him from the expedition.

"It is contrary to the spirit of the age," she asserted.

"Do you mean by that, contrary to the Machine?"

"In a sense, but—"

His image in the blue plate faded.

"Kuno!"

He had isolated himself.

For a moment Vashti felt lonely.

Then she generated the light, and the sight of her room, flooded with radiance and studded with electric buttons, revived her. There were buttons and switches everywhere—buttons to call for food, for music, for clothing. There was the hot-bath button, by pressure of which a basin of (imitation) marble rose out of the floor, filled to the brim with a warm deodorized liquid. There was the cold-bath button. There was the button that produced literature. And there were of course the buttons by which she communicated with her friends. The room, though it contained nothing, was in touch with all that she cared for in the world.

Vashti's next move was to turn off the isolation-switch, and all the accumulations of the last three minutes burst upon her. The room was filled with the noise of bells, and speaking-tubes. What was the new food like? Could she recommend it? Had she had any ideas lately? Might one tell her one's own ideas? Would she make an engagement to visit the public nurseries at an early date?—say this day month.

To most of these questions she replied with irritation—a growing quality in that accelerated age. She said that the new food was horrible. That she could not visit the public nurseries through press of engagements. That she had no ideas of her own but had just been told one—that four stars and three in the middle were like a man: she doubted there was much in it. Then she switched off her correspondents, for it was time to deliver her lecture on Australian music.

The clumsy system of public gatherings

## *Twentieth Century Blues*

had been long since abandoned; neither Vashti nor her audience stirred from their rooms. Seated in her arm-chair she spoke, while they in their arm-chairs heard her, fairly well, and saw her, fairly well. She opened with a humorous account of music in the pre-Mongolian epoch, and went on to describe the great outburst of song that followed the Chinese conquest. Remote and primeval as were the methods of I-San-So and the Brisbane school, she yet felt (she said) that study of them might repay the musician of today: they had freshness; they had, above all, ideas.

Her lecture, which lasted ten minutes, was well received, and at its conclusion she and many of her audience listened to a lecture on the sea; there were ideas to be got from the sea; the speaker had donned a respirator and visited it lately. Then she fed, talked to many friends, had a bath, talked again, and summoned her bed.

The bed was not to her liking. It was too large, and she had a feeling for a small bed. Complaint was useless, for beds were of the same dimension all over the world, and to have had an alternative size would have involved vast alterations in the Machine. Vashti isolated herself—it was necessary, for neither day nor night existed under the ground—and reviewed all that had happened since she had summoned the bed last. Ideas? Scarcely any. Events—was Kuno's invitation an event?

By her side, on the little reading-desk, was a survival from the ages of litter—one book. This was the Book of the Machine. In it were instructions against every possible contingency. If she was hot or cold or dyspeptic or at loss for a word, she went to the Book, and it told her which button to press. The Central Committee published it. In accordance with a growing habit, it was richly bound.

Sitting up in the bed, she took it reverently in her hands. She glanced round the glowing room as if some one might be watching her. Then, half ashamed, half joyful, she murmured, "O Machine! O Machine!" and raised the volume to her lips. Thrice she kissed it, thrice inclined her head, thrice she felt the delirium of acquiescence. Her ritual performed, she turned to page 1367, which gave the times of the departure of the air-ships from the island in the southern hemisphere, under whose soil she lived, to the island in the northern hemisphere, whereunder lived her son.

She thought, "I have not the time."

She made the room dark and slept; she awoke and made the room light; she ate and exchanged ideas with her friends, and listened to music and attended lectures; she made the room dark and slept. Above her, beneath her, and around her, the Machine hummed eternally; she did not notice the noise, for she had been born with it in her ears. The earth, carrying her, hummed as it sped through silence, turning her now to the invisible sun, now to the invisible stars. She awoke and made the room light.

"Kuno!"

"I will not talk to you," he answered, "until you come."

"Have you been on the surface of the earth since we spoke last?"

His image faded.

Again she consulted the Book. She became very nervous and lay back in her chair palpitating. Think of her as without teeth or hair. Presently she directed the chair to the wall, and pressed an unfamiliar button. The wall swung apart slowly. Through the opening she saw a tunnel that curved slightly, so that its goal was not visible. Should she go to see her

## *The Machine Stops*

son, here was the beginning of the journey.

Of course she knew all about the communication-system. There was nothing mysterious in it. She would summon a car and it would fly with her down the tunnel until it reached the lift that communicated with the air-ship station: the system had been in use for many, many years, long before the universal establishment of the Machine. And of course she had studied the civilization that had immediately preceded her own—the civilization that had mistaken the functions of the system, and had used it for bringing people to things, instead of for bringing things to people. Those funny old days, when men went for change of air instead of changing the air in their rooms! And yet—she was frightened of the tunnel: she had not seen it since her last child was born. It curved—but not quite as she remembered; it was brilliant—but not quite as brilliant as a lecturer had suggested. Vashti was seized with the terrors of direct experience. She shrank back into the room, and the wall closed up again.

"Kuno," she said, "I cannot come to see you. I am not well."

Immediately an enormous apparatus fell on to her out of the ceiling, a thermometer was automatically inserted between her lips, a stethoscope was automatically laid upon her heart. She lay powerless. Cool pads soothed her forehead. Kuno had telegraphed to her doctor.

So the human passions still blundered up and down in the Machine. Vashti drank the medicine that the doctor projected into her mouth, and the machinery retired into the ceiling. The voice of Kuno was heard asking how she felt.

"Better." Then with irritation: "But why do you not come to me instead?"

"Because I cannot leave this place."

"Why?"

"Because, any moment, something tremendous may happen."

"Have you been on the surface of the earth yet?"

"Not yet."

"Then what is it?"

"I will not tell you through the Machine."

She resumed her life.

But she thought of Kuno as a baby, his birth, his removal to the public nurseries, her one visit to him there, his visits to her—visits which stopped when the Machine had assigned him a room on the other side of the earth. "Parents, duties of," said the Book of the Machine, "cease at the moment of birth. P. 422327483." True, but there was something special about Kuno—indeed there had been something special about all her children—and, after all, she must brave the journey if he desired it. And "something tremendous might happen." What did that mean? The nonsense of a youthful man, no doubt, but she must go. Again she pressed the unfamiliar button, again the wall swung back, and she saw the tunnel that curved out of sight. Claspings the Book, she rose, tottered onto the platform, and summoned the car. Her room closed behind her: the journey to the northern hemisphere had begun.

Of course it was perfectly easy. The car approached and in it she found arm-chairs exactly like her own. When she signaled, it stopped, and she tottered into the lift. One other passenger was in the lift, the first fellow creature she had seen face to face for months. Few traveled in these days, for, thanks to the advance of science, the earth was exactly alike all over. Rapid intercourse, from which the previous civilization had hoped so much, had ended

## *Twentieth Century Blues*

by defeating itself. What was the good of going to Pekin when it was just like Shrewsbury? Why return to Shrewsbury when it would be just like Pekin? Men seldom moved their bodies; all unrest was concentrated in the soul.

The air-ship service was a relic from the former age. It was kept up, because it was easier to keep it up than to stop it or to diminish it, but it now far exceeded the wants of the population. Vessel after vessel would rise from the vomitories of Rye or of Christchurch (I use the antique names), would sail into the crowded sky, and would draw up at the wharves of the south—empty. So nicely adjusted was the system, so independent of meteorology, that the sky, whether calm or cloudy, resembled a vast kaleidoscope whereon the same patterns periodically recurred. The ship on which Vashti sailed started now at sunset, now at dawn. But always, as it passed above Rheims, it would neighbor the ship that served between Helsingfors and the Brazils, and, every third time it surmounted the Alps, the fleet of Palermo would cross its track behind. Night and day, wind and storm, tide and earthquake, impeded man no longer. He had harnessed Leviathan. All the old literature, with its praise of Nature, and its fear of Nature, rang false as the prattle of a child.

Yet as Vashti saw the vast flank of the ship, stained with exposure to the outer air, her horror of direct experience returned. It was not quite like the air-ship in the cinematophote. For one thing it smelt—not strongly or unpleasantly, but it did smell, and with her eyes shut she should have known that a new thing was close to her. Then she had to walk to it from the lift, had to submit to glances from the other passengers. The man in front dropped his Book—no great matter,

but it disquieted them all. In the rooms, if the Book was dropped, the floor raised it mechanically, but the gangway to the air-ship was not so prepared, and the sacred volume lay motionless. They stopped—the thing was unforeseen—and the man, instead of picking up his property, felt the muscles of his arm to see how they had failed him. Then someone actually said with direct utterance: "We shall be late"—and they trooped on board, Vashti treading on the pages as she did so.

Inside, her anxiety increased. The arrangements were old-fashioned and rough. There was even a female attendant, to whom she would have to announce her wants during the voyage. Of course a revolving platform ran the length of the boat, but she was expected to walk from it to her cabin. Some cabins were better than others, and she did not get the best. She thought the attendant had been unfair, and spasms of rage shook her. The glass valves had closed, she could not go back. She saw, at the end of the vestibule, the lift in which she had ascended going quietly up and down, empty. Beneath those corridors of shining tiles were rooms, tier below tier, reaching far into the earth, and in each room there sat a human being, eating, or sleeping, or producing ideas. And buried deep in the hive was her own room. Vashti was afraid.

"O Machine! O Machine!" she murmured, and caressed her Book, and was comforted.

Then the sides of the vestibule seemed to melt together, as do the passages that we see in dreams, the lift vanished, the Book that had been dropped slid to the left and vanished, polished tiles rushed by like a stream of water, there was a slight jar, and the air-ship, issuing from its tun-

## *The Machine Stops*

nel, soared above the waters of a tropical ocean.

It was night. For a moment she saw the coast of Sumatra edged by the phosphorescence of waves, and crowned by lighthouses, still sending forth their disregarded beams. They also vanished, and only the stars distracted her. They were not motionless, but swayed to and fro above her head, thronging out of one skylight into another, as if the universe and not the air-ship was careening. And, as often happens on clear nights, they seemed now to be in perspective, now on a plane; now piled tier beyond tier into the infinite heavens, now concealing infinity, a roof limiting for ever the visions of men. In either case they seemed intolerable. "Are we to travel in the dark?" called the passengers angrily, and the attendant, who had been careless, generated the light, and pulled down the blinds of pliable metal. When the air-ships had been built, the desire to look direct at things still lingered in the world. Hence the extraordinary number of skylights and windows, and the proportionate discomfort to those who were civilized and refined. Even in Vash-ti's cabin one star peeped through a flaw in the blind, and after a few hours' uneasy slumber, she was disturbed by an unfamiliar glow, which was the dawn.

Quick as the ship had sped westwards, the earth had rolled eastwards quicker still, and had dragged back Vash-ti and her companions towards the sun. Science could prolong the night, but only for a little, and those high hopes of neutralizing the earth's diurnal revolution had passed, together with hopes that were possibly higher. To "keep pace with the sun," or even to outstrip it, had been the aim of the civilization preceding this. Racing aeroplanes had been built for the purpose,

capable of enormous speed, and steered by the greatest intellects of the epoch. Round the globe they went, round and round, westward, westward, round and round, amidst humanity's applause. In vain. The globe went eastward quicker still, horrible accidents occurred, and the Committee of the Machine, at the time rising into prominence, declared the pursuit illegal, unmechanical, and punishable by Homelessness.

Of Homelessness more will be said later.

Doubtless the Committee was right. Yet the attempt to "defeat the sun" aroused the last common interest that our race experienced about the heavenly bodies, or indeed about anything. It was the last time that men were compacted by thinking of a power outside the world. The sun had conquered, yet it was the end of his spiritual dominion. Dawn, midday, twilight, the zodiacal path, touched neither men's lives nor their hearts, and science retreated into the ground, to concentrate herself upon problems that she was certain of solving.

So when Vash-ti found her cabin invaded by a rosy finger of light, she was annoyed, and tried to adjust the blind. But the blind flew up altogether, and she saw through the skylight small pink clouds, swaying against a background of blue, and as the sun crept higher, its radiance entered direct, brimming down the wall, like a golden sea. It rose and fell with the air-ship's motion, just as waves rise and fall, but it advanced steadily, as a tide advances. Unless she was careful, it would strike her face. A spasm of horror shook her and she rang for the attendant. The attendant too was horrified, but she could do nothing; it was not her place to mend the blind. She could only suggest that the lady should change her cabin, which she accordingly prepared to do.



## *Twentieth Century Blues*

People were almost exactly alike all over the world, but the attendant of the airship, perhaps owing to her exceptional duties, had grown a little out of the common. She had often to address passengers with direct speech, and this had given her a certain roughness and originality of manner. When Vashti swerved away from the sunbeams with a cry, she behaved barbarically—she put out her hand to steady her.

"How dare you!" exclaimed the passenger. "You forget yourself!"

The woman was confused, and apologized for not having let her fall. People never touched one another. The custom had become obsolete, owing to the Machine.

"Where are we now?" asked Vashti haughtily.

"We are over Asia," said the attendant, anxious to be polite.

"Asia?"

"You must excuse my common way of speaking. I have got into the habit of calling places over which I pass by their unmechanical names."

"Oh, I remember Asia. The Mongols came from it."

"Beneath us, in the open air, stood a city that was once called Simla."

"Have you ever heard of the Mongols and of the Brisbane school?"

"No."

"Brisbane also stood in the open air."

"Those mountains to the right—let me show you them." She pushed back a metal blind. The main chain of the Himalayas was revealed. "They were once called the Roof of the World, those mountains."

"What a foolish name!"

"You must remember that, before the dawn of civilization, they seemed to be an impenetrable wall that touched the

stars. It was supposed that no one but the gods could exist above their summits. How we have advanced, thanks to the Machine!"

"How we have advanced, thanks to the Machine!" said Vashti.

"How we have advanced, thanks to the Machine!" echoed the passenger who had dropped his Book the night before, and who was standing in the passage.

"And that white stuff in the cracks?—what is it?"

"I have forgotten its name."

"Cover the window, please. These mountains give me no ideas."

The northern aspect of the Himalayas was in deep shadow: on the Indian slope the sun had just prevailed. The forests had been destroyed during the literature epoch for the purpose of making newspaper-pulp, but the snows were awakening to their morning glory, and clouds still hung on the breasts of Kinchinjunga. In the plain were seen the ruins of cities, with diminished rivers creeping by their walls, and by the sides of these were sometimes the signs of vomitories, marking the cities of today. Over the whole prospect airships rushed, crossing and intercrossing with incredible aplomb, and rising nonchalantly when they desired to escape the perturbations of the lower atmosphere and to traverse the Roof of the World.

"We have indeed advanced, thanks to the Machine," repeated the attendant, and hid the Himalayas behind a metal blind.

The day dragged wearily forward. The passengers sat each in his cabin, avoiding one another with an almost physical repulsion and longing to be once more under the surface of the earth. There were eight or ten of them, mostly young males, sent out from the public nurseries

## *The Machine Stops*

to inhabit the rooms of those who had died in various parts of the earth. The man who had dropped his Book was on the homeward journey. He had been sent to Sumatra for the purpose of propagating the race. Vashti alone was traveling by her private will.

At midday she took a second glance at the earth. The air-ship was crossing another range of mountains, but she could see little, owing to clouds. Masses of black

rock hovered below her, and merged indistinctly into gray. Their shapes were fantastic; one of them resembled a prostrate man.

"No ideas here," murmured Vashti, and hid the Caucasus behind a metal blind.

In the evening she looked again. They were crossing a golden sea, in which lay many small islands and one peninsula.

She repeated, "No ideas here," and hid Greece behind a metal blind.

## PART II

### *The Mending Apparatus*

By a vestibule, by a lift, by a tubular railway, by a platform, by a sliding door—by reversing all the steps of her departure did Vashti arrive at her son's room, which exactly resembled her own. She might well declare that the visit was superfluous. The buttons, the knobs, the reading-desk with the Book, the temperature, the atmosphere, the illumination—all were exactly the same. And if Kuno himself, flesh of her flesh, stood close beside her at last, what profit was there in that? She was too well-bred to shake him by the hand.

Avverting her eyes, she spoke as follows:

"Here I am. I have had the most terrible journey and greatly retarded the development of my soul. It is not worth it, Kuno, it is not worth it. My time is too precious. The sunlight almost touched me, and I have met with the rudest people. I can only stop a few minutes. Say what you want to say, and then I must return."

"I have been threatened with Homelessness," said Kuno.

She looked at him now.

"I have been threatened with Homelessness, and I could not tell you such a thing through the Machine."

Homelessness means death. The victim is exposed to the air, which kills him.

"I have been outside since I spoke to you last. The tremendous thing has happened, and they have discovered me."

"But why shouldn't you go outside!" she exclaimed. "It is perfectly legal, perfectly mechanical, to visit the surface of the earth. I have lately been to a lecture on the sea; there is no objection to that; one simply summons a respirator and gets an Egression-permit. It is not the kind of thing that spiritually-minded people do, and I begged you not to do it, but there is no legal objection to it."

"I did not get an Egression-permit."

"Then how did you get out?"

"I found out a way of my own."

The phrase conveyed no meaning to her, and he had to repeat it.

"A way of your own?" she whispered.

"But that would be wrong."

"Why?"

The question shocked her beyond measure.

"You are beginning to worship the Machine," he said coldly. "You think it irreligious of me to have found out a way

of my own. It was just what the Committee thought, when they threatened me with Homelessness."

At this she grew angry. "I worship nothing!" she cried. "I am most advanced. I don't think you irreligious, for there is no such thing as religion left. All the fear and the superstition that existed once have been destroyed by the Machine. I only meant that to find out a way of your own was— Besides, there is no new way out."

"So it is always supposed."

"Except through the vomitories, for which one must have an Egression-permit, it is impossible to get out. The Book says so."

"Well, the Book's wrong, for I have been out on my feet."

For Kuno was possessed of a certain physical strength.

By these days it was a demerit to be muscular. Each infant was examined at birth, and all who promised undue strength were destroyed. Humanitarians may protest, but it would have been no true kindness to let an athlete live; he would never have been happy in that state of life to which the Machine had called him; he would have yearned for trees to climb, rivers to bathe in, meadows and hills against which he might measure his body. Man must be adapted to his surroundings, must he not? In the dawn of the world our weakly must be exposed on Mount Taygetus, in its twilight our strong will suffer Euthanasia, that the Machine may progress, that the Machine may progress, that the Machine may progress eternally.

"You know that we have lost the sense of space. We say 'space is annihilated,' but we have annihilated not space, but the sense thereof. We have lost a part of ourselves. I determined to recover it, and I

began by walking up and down the platform of the railway outside my room. Up and down, until I was tired, and so did recapture the meaning of 'Near' and 'Far.' 'Near' is a place to which I can get quickly *on my feet*, not a place to which the train or the air-ship will take me quickly. 'Far' is a place to which I cannot get quickly on my feet; the vomitory is 'far,' though I could be there in thirty-eight seconds by summoning the train. Man is the measure. That was my first lesson. Man's feet are the measure for distance, his hands are the measure for ownership, his body is the measure for all that is lovable and desirable and strong. Then I went further: it was then that I called to you for the first time, and you would not come.

"This city, as you know, is built deep beneath the surface of the earth, with only the vomitories protruding. Having paced the platform outside my own room, I took the lift to the next platform and paced that also, and so with each in turn, until I came to the topmost, above which begins the earth. All the platforms were exactly alike, and all that I gained by visiting them was to develop my sense of space and my muscles. I think I should have been content with this—it is not a little thing—but as I walked and brooded, it occurred to me that our cities had been built in the days when men still breathed the outer air, and that there had been ventilation shafts for the workmen. I could think of nothing but these ventilation shafts. Had they been destroyed by all the food-tubes and medicine-tubes and music-tubes that the Machine has evolved lately? Or did traces of them remain? One thing was certain. If I came upon them anywhere, it would be in the railway-tunnels of the topmost story. Everywhere else, all space was accounted for.

## *The Machine Stops*

"I am telling my story quickly, but don't think that I was not a coward or that your answers never depressed me. It is not the proper thing, it is not mechanical, it is not decent to walk along a railway-tunnel. I did not fear that I might tread upon a live rail and be killed. I feared something far more intangible—doing what was not contemplated by the Machine. Then I said to myself, 'Man is the measure,' and I went, and after many visits I found an opening.

"The tunnels, of course, were lighted. Everything is light, artificial light; darkness is the exception. So when I saw a black gap in the tiles, I knew that it was an exception, and rejoiced. I put in my arm—I could put in no more at first—and waved it round and round in ecstasy. I loosened another tile, and put in my head, and shouted into the darkness: 'I am coming, I shall do it yet,' and my voice reverberated down endless passages. I seemed to hear the spirits of those dead workmen who had returned each evening to the starlight and to their wives, and all the generations who had lived in the open air called back to me, 'You will do it yet, you are coming.'"

He paused, and, absurd as he was, his last words moved her. For Kuno had lately asked to be a father, and his request had been refused by the Committee. His was not a type that the Machine desired to hand on.

"Then a train passed. It brushed by me, but I thrust my head and arms into the hole. I had done enough for one day, so I crawled back to the platform, went down in the lift, and summoned my bed. Ah, what dreams! And again I called you, and again you refused."

She shook her head and said:

"Don't. Don't talk of these terrible

things. You make me miserable. You are throwing civilization away."

"But I had got back the sense of space and a man cannot rest then. I determined to get in at the hole and climb the shaft. And so I exercised my arms. Day after day I went through ridiculous movements, until my flesh ached, and I could hang by my hands and hold the pillow of my bed outstretched for many minutes. Then I summoned a respirator, and started.

"It was easy at first. The mortar had somehow rotted, and I soon pushed some more tiles in, and clambered after them into the darkness, and the spirits of the dead comforted me. I don't know what I mean by that. I just say what I felt. I felt, for the first time, that a protest had been lodged against corruption, and that even as the dead were comforting me, so I was comforting the unborn. I felt that humanity existed, and that it existed without clothes. How can I possibly explain this? It was naked, humanity seemed naked, and all these tubes and buttons and machineries neither came into the world with us, nor will they follow us out, nor do they matter supremely while we are here. Had I been strong, I would have torn off every garment I had, and gone out into the outer air unswaddled. But this is not for me, nor perhaps for my generation. I climbed with my respirator and my hygienic clothes and my dietetic tabloids! Better thus than not at all.

"There was a ladder, made of some primeval metal. The light from the railway fell upon its lowest rungs, and I saw that it led straight upwards out of the rubble at the bottom of the shaft. Perhaps our ancestors ran up and down it a dozen times daily, in their building. As I climbed, the rough edges cut through my gloves so that my hands bled. The light

## *Twentieth Century Blues*

helped me for a little, and then came darkness and, worse still, silence which pierced my ears like a sword. The Machine hums! Did you know that? Its hum penetrates our blood, and may even guide our thoughts. Who knows! I was getting beyond its power. Then I thought: 'This silence means that I am doing wrong.' But I heard voices in the silence, and again they strengthened me." He laughed. "I had need of them. The next moment I cracked my head against something."

She sighed.

"I had reached one of those pneumatic stoppers that defend us from the outer air. You may have noticed them on the air-ship. Pitch dark, my feet on the rungs of an invisible ladder, my hands cut; I cannot explain how I lived through this part, but the voices still comforted me, and I felt for fastenings. The stopper, I suppose, was about eight feet across. I passed my hand over it as far as I could reach. It was perfectly smooth. I felt it almost to the center. Not quite to the center, for my arm was too short. Then the voice said: 'Jump. It is worth it. There may be a handle in the center, and you may catch hold of it and so come to us your own way. And if there is no handle, so that you may fall and are dashed to pieces—it is still worth it: you will still come to us your own way.' So I jumped. There was a handle, and—"

He paused. Tears gathered in his mother's eyes. She knew that he was fated. If he did not die today he would die tomorrow. There was not room for such a person in the world. And with her pity disgust mingled. She was ashamed at having borne such a son, she who had always been so respectable and so full of ideas. Was he really the little boy to whom she

had taught the use of his stops and buttons, and to whom she had given his first lessons in the Book? The very hair that disfigured his lip showed that he was reverting to some savage type. On atavism the Machine can have no mercy.

"There was a handle, and I did catch it. I hung tranced over the darkness and heard the hum of these workings as the last whisper in a dying dream. All the things I had cared about and all the people I had spoken to through tubes appeared infinitely little. Meanwhile the handle revolved. My weight had set something in motion and I span slowly, and then—

"I cannot describe it. I was lying with my face to the sunshine. Blood poured from my nose and ears and I heard a tremendous roaring. The stopper, with me clinging to it, had simply been blown out of the earth, and the air that we make down here was escaping through the vent into the air above. It burst up like a fountain. I crawled back to it—for the upper air hurts—and, as it were, I took great sips from the edge. My respirator had flown goodness knows where, my clothes were torn. I just lay with my lips close to the hole, and I sipped until the bleeding stopped. You can imagine nothing so curious. This hollow in the grass—I will speak of it in a minute,—the sun shining into it, not brilliantly but through marbled clouds,—the peace, the nonchalance, the sense of space, and, brushing my cheek, the roaring fountain of our artificial air! Soon I spied my respirator, bobbing up and down in the current high above my head, and higher still were many air-ships. But no one ever looks out of air-ships, and in my case they could not have picked me up. There I was, stranded. The sun shone a little way down the shaft, and revealed

## *The Machine Stops*

the topmost rung of the ladder, but it was hopeless trying to reach it. I should either have been tossed up again by the escape, or else have fallen in, and died. I could only lie on the grass, sipping and sipping, and from time to time glancing around me.

"I knew that I was in Wessex, for I had taken care to go to a lecture on the subject before starting. Wessex lies above the room in which we are talking now. It was once an important state. Its kings held all the southern coast from the Andredswald to Cornwall, while the Wansdyke protected them on the north, running over the high ground. The lecturer was only concerned with the rise of Wessex, so I do not know how long it remained an international power, nor would the knowledge have assisted me. To tell the truth I could do nothing but laugh, during this part. There was I, with a pneumatic stopper by my side and a respirator bobbing over my head, imprisoned, all three of us, in a grass-grown hollow that was edged with fern."

Then he grew grave again.

"Lucky for me that it was a hollow. For the air began to fall back into it and to fill it as water fills a bowl. I could crawl about. Presently I stood. I breathed a mixture, in which the air that hurts predominated whenever I tried to climb the sides. This was not so bad. I had not lost my tabloids and remained ridiculously cheerful, and as for the Machine, I forgot about it altogether. My one aim now was to get to the top, where the ferns were, and to view whatever objects lay beyond.

"I rushed the slope. The new air was still too bitter for me and I came rolling back, after a momentary vision of something gray. The sun grew very feeble, and

I remembered that he was in Scorpio—I had been to a lecture on that too. If the sun is in Scorpio and you are in Wessex, it means that you must be as quick as you can, or it will get too dark. (This is the first bit of useful information I have ever got from a lecture, and I expect it will be the last.) It made me try frantically to breathe the new air, and to advance as far as I dared out of my pond. The hollow filled so slowly. At times I thought that the fountain played with less vigor. My respirator seemed to dance nearer the earth; the roar was decreasing."

He broke off.

"I don't think this is interesting you. The rest will interest you even less. There are no ideas in it, and I wish that I had not troubled you to come. We are too different, mother."

She told him to continue.

"It was evening before I climbed the bank. The sun had very nearly slipped out of the sky by this time, and I could not get a good view. You, who have just crossed the Roof of the World, will not want to hear an account of the little hills that I saw—low colorless hills. But to me they were living and the turf that covered them was a skin, under which their muscles rippled, and I felt that those hills had called with incalculable force to men in the past, and that men had loved them. Now they sleep—perhaps forever. They commune with humanity in dreams. Happy the man, happy the woman, who awakes the hills of Wessex. For though they sleep, they will never die."

His voice rose passionately.

"Cannot you see, cannot all your lecturers see, that it is we who are dying, and that down here the only thing that really lives is the Machine? We created the

## *Twentieth Century Blues*

Machine, to do our will, but we cannot make it do our will now. It has robbed us of the sense of space and of the sense of touch, it has blurred every human relation and narrowed down love to a carnal act, it has paralyzed our bodies and our wills, and now it compels us to worship it. The Machine develops—but not on our lines. The Machine proceeds—but not to our goal. We only exist as the blood corpuscles that course through its arteries, and if it could work without us, it would let us die. Oh, I have no remedy—or, at least, only one—to tell men again and again that I have seen the hills of Wessex as Aelfrid saw them when he overthrew the Danes.

"So the sun set. I forgot to mention that a belt of mist lay between my hill and other hills, and that it was the color of pearl."

He broke off for the second time.

"Go on," said his mother wearily.

He shook his head.

"Go on. Nothing that you say can distress me now. I am hardened."

"I had meant to tell you the rest, but I cannot: I know that I cannot: good-by."

Vashti stood irresolute. All her nerves were tingling with his blasphemies. But she was also inquisitive.

"This is unfair," she complained. "You have called me across the world to hear your story, and hear it I will. Tell me—as briefly as possible, for this is a disastrous waste of time—tell me how you returned to civilization."

"Oh,—that!" he said, starting. "You would like to hear about civilization. Certainly. Had I got to where my respirator fell down?"

"No—but I understand everything now. You put on your respirator, and managed

to walk along the surface of the earth to a vomitory, and there your conduct was reported to the Central Committee."

"By no means."

He passed his hand over his forehead, as if dispelling some strong impression. Then, resuming his narrative, he warmed to it again.

"My respirator fell about sunset. I had mentioned that the fountain seemed feebler, had I not?"

"Yes."

"About sunset, it let the respirator fall. As I said, I had entirely forgotten about the Machine, and I paid no great attention at the time, being occupied with other things. I had my pool of air, into which I could dip when the outer keenness became intolerable, and which would possibly remain for days, provided that no wind sprang up to disperse it. Not until it was too late, did I realize what the stoppage of the escape implied. You see—the gap in the tunnel had been mended; the Mending Apparatus, the Mending Apparatus, was after me.

"One other warning I had, but I neglected it. The sky at night was clearer than it had been in the day, and the moon, which was about half the sky behind the sun, shone into the dell at moments quite brightly. I was in my usual place—on the boundary between the two atmospheres—when I thought I saw something dark move across the bottom of the dell, and vanish into the shaft. In my folly, I ran down. I bent over and listened, and I thought I heard a faint scraping noise in the depths.

"At this—but it was too late—I took alarm. I determined to put on my respirator and to walk right out of the dell. But my respirator had gone. I knew exactly

## *The Machine Stops*

where it had fallen—between the stopper and the aperture—and I could even feel the mark that it had made in the turf. It had gone, and I realized that something evil was at work, and I had better escape to the other air, and, if I must die, die running towards the cloud that had been the color of a pearl. I never started. Out of the shaft—it is too horrible. A worm, a long white worm, had crawled out of the shaft and was gliding over the moon-lit grass.

"I screamed. I did everything that I should not have done, I stamped upon the creature instead of flying from it, and it at once curled round the ankle. Then we fought. The worm let me run all over the dell, but edged up my leg as I ran. 'Help!' I cried. (That part is too awful. It belongs to the part that you will never know.) 'Help!' I cried. (Why cannot we suffer in silence?) 'Help!' I cried. Then my feet were wound together, I fell, I was dragged away from the dear ferns and the living hills, and past the great metal stopper (I can tell you this part), and I thought it might save me again if I caught hold of the handle. It also was enwrapped, it also. Oh, the whole dell was full of the things. They were searching it in all directions, they were denuding it, and the white snouts of others peeped out of the hole, ready if needed. Everything that could be moved they brought—brushwood, bundles of fern, everything, and down we all went intertwined into hell. The last things that I saw, ere the stopper closed after us, were certain stars, and I felt that a man of my sort lived in the sky. For I did fight, I fought till the very end, and it was only my head hitting against the ladder that quieted me. I woke up in this room. The worms had van-

ished. I was surrounded by artificial air, artificial light, artificial peace, and my friends were calling to me down speaking-tubes to know whether I had come across any new ideas lately."

Here his story ended. Discussion of it was impossible, and Vashti turned to go.

"It will end in Homelessness," she said quietly.

"I wish it would," retorted Kuno.

"The Machine has been most merciful."

"I prefer the mercy of God."

"By that superstitious phrase, do you mean that you could live in the outer air?"

"Yes."

"Have you ever seen, round the vomitories, the bones of those who were extruded after the Great Rebellion?"

"Yes."

"They were left where they perished for our edification. A few crawled away, but they perished, too—who can doubt it? And so with the Homeless of our own day. The surface of the earth supports life no longer."

"Indeed."

"Ferns and a little grass may survive, but all higher forms have perished. Has any air-ship detected them?"

"No."

"Has any lecturer dealt with them?"

"No."

"Then why this obstinacy?"

"Because I have seen them," he exploded.

"Seen *what*?"

"Because I have seen her in the twilight—because she came to my help when I called—because she, too, was entangled by the worms, and, luckier than I, was killed by one of them piercing her throat."

He was mad. Vashti departed, nor, in the troubles that followed, did she ever see his face again.



## *Twentieth Century Blues*

### PART III

#### *The Homeless*

During the years that followed Kuno's escapade, two important developments took place in the Machine. On the surface they were revolutionary, but in either case men's minds had been prepared beforehand, and they did but express tendencies that were latent already.

The first of these was the abolition of respirators.

Advanced thinkers, like Vashti, had always held it foolish to visit the surface of the earth. Air-ships might be necessary, but what was the good of going out for mere curiosity and crawling along for a mile or two in a terrestrial motor? The habit was vulgar and perhaps faintly improper: it was unproductive of ideas, and had no connection with the habits that really mattered. So respirators were abolished, and with them, of course, the terrestrial motors, and except for a few lecturers, who complained that they were debarred access to their subject-matter, the development was accepted quietly. Those who still wanted to know what the earth was like had after all only to listen to some gramophone, or to look into some cinematophote. And even the lecturers acquiesced when they found that a lecture on the sea was none the less stimulating when compiled out of other lectures that had already been delivered on the same subject. "Beware of first-hand ideas!" exclaimed one of the most advanced of them. "First-hand ideas do not really exist. They are but the physical impressions produced by love and fear, and on this gross foundation who could erect a philosophy? Let your ideas be second-hand, and if possible tenth-hand, for then they will be far removed from that disturbing element—

direct observation. Do not learn anything about this subject of mine—the French Revolution. Learn instead what I think that Enicharmon thought Urizen thought Gutch thought Ho-Yung thought Chi-Bo-Sing thought Lafcadio Hearn thought Carlyle thought Mirabeau said about the French Revolution. Through the medium of these eight great minds, the blood that was shed at Paris and the windows that were broken at Versailles will be clarified to an idea which you may employ most profitably in your daily lives. But be sure that the intermediates are many and varied, for in history one authority exists to counteract another. Urizen must counteract the skepticism of Ho-Yung and Enicharmon, I must myself counteract the impetuosity of Gutch. You who listen to me are in a better position to judge about the French Revolution than I am. Your descendants will be even in a better position than you, for they will learn what you think I think, and yet another intermediate will be added to the chain. And in time"—his voice rose—"there will come a generation that has got beyond facts, beyond impressions, a generation absolutely colorless, a generation

seraphically free  
From taint of personality,

which will see the French Revolution not as it happened, nor as they would like it to have happened, but as it would have happened, had it taken place in the days of the Machine."

Tremendous applause greeted this lecture, which did but voice a feeling already latent in the minds of men—a feeling that terrestrial facts must be ignored, and that

## *The Machine Stops*

the abolition of respirators was a positive gain. It was even suggested that air-ships should be abolished too. This was not done, because air-ships had somehow worked themselves into the Machine's system. But year by year they were used less, and mentioned less by thoughtful men.

The second great development was the re-establishment of religion.

This, too, had been voiced in the celebrated lecture. No one could mistake the reverent tone in which the peroration had concluded, and it awakened a responsive echo in the heart of each. Those who had long worshiped silently, now began to talk. They described the strange feeling of peace that came over them when they handled the Book of the Machine, the pleasure that it was to repeat certain numerals out of it, however little meaning those numerals conveyed to the outward ear, the ecstasy of touching a button, however unimportant, or of ringing an electric bell, however superfluously.

"The Machine," they exclaimed, "feeds us and clothes us and houses us; through it we speak to one another, through it we see one another, in it we have our being. The Machine is the friend of ideas and the enemy of superstition: the Machine is omnipotent, eternal; blessed is the Machine." And before long this allocution was printed on the first page of the Book, and in subsequent editions the ritual swelled into a complicated system of praise and prayer. The word "religion" was sedulously avoided, and in theory the Machine was still the creation and the implement of man. But in practice all, save a few retrogrades, worshiped it as divine. Nor was it worshiped in unity. One believer would be chiefly impressed by the blue optic plates, through which he saw other believers; another by the Mending

Apparatus, which sinful Kuno had compared to worms; another by the lifts, another by the Book. And each would pray to this or to that, and ask it to intercede for him with the Machine as a whole. Persecution—that also was present. It did not break out, for reasons that will be set forward shortly. But it was latent, and all who did not accept the minimum known as "undenominational Mechanism" lived in danger of Homelessness, which means death, as we know.

To attribute these two great developments to the Central Committee, is to take a very narrow view of civilization. The Central Committee announced the developments, it is true, but they were no more the cause of them than were the kings of the imperialistic period the cause of war. Rather did they yield to some invincible pressure, which came no one knew whither, and which, when gratified, was succeeded by some new pressure equally invincible. To such a state of affairs it is convenient to give the name of progress. No one confessed the Machine was out of hand. Year by year it was served with increased efficiency and decreased intelligence. The better a man knew his own duties upon it, the less he understood the duties of his neighbor, and in all the world there was not one who understood the monster as a whole. Those master brains had perished. They had left full directions, it is true, and their successors had each of them mastered a portion of those directions. But Humanity, in its desire for comfort, had over-reached itself. It had exploited the riches of nature too far. Quietly and complacently, it was sinking into decadence, and progress had come to mean the progress of the Machine.

As for Vashiti, her life went peacefully forward until the final disaster. She made

## *Twentieth Century Blues*

her room dark and slept; she awoke and made the room light. She lectured and attended lectures. She exchanged ideas with her innumerable friends and believed she was growing more spiritual. At times a friend was granted Euthanasia, and left his or her room for the homelessness that is beyond all human conception. Vashti did not much mind. After an unsuccessful lecture, she would sometimes ask for Euthanasia herself. But the death-rate was not permitted to exceed the birth-rate, and the Machine had hitherto refused it to her.

The troubles began quietly, long before she was conscious of them.

One day she was astonished at receiving a message from her son. They never communicated, having nothing in common, and she had only heard indirectly that he was still alive, and had been transferred from the northern hemisphere, where he had behaved so mischievously, to the southern—indeed, to a room not far from her own.

"Does he want me to visit him?" she thought. "Never again, never. And I have not the time."

No, it was madness of another kind.

He refused to visualize his face upon the blue plate, and speaking out of the darkness with solemnity said:

"The Machine stops."

"What do you say?"

"The Machine is stopping, I know it, I know the signs."

She burst into a peal of laughter. He heard her and was angry, and they spoke no more.

"Can you imagine anything more absurd?" she cried to a friend. "A man who was my son believes that the Machine is stopping. It would be impious if it was not mad."

"The Machine is stopping?" her friend

replied. "What does that mean? The phrase conveys nothing to me."

"Nor to me."

"He does not refer, I suppose, to the trouble there has been lately with the music?"

"Oh, no, of course not. Let us talk about music."

"Have you complained to the authorities?"

"Yes, and they say it wants mending, and referred me to the Committee of the Mending Apparatus. I complained of those curious gasping sighs that disfigure the symphonies of the Brisbane school. They sound like someone in pain. The Committee of the Mending Apparatus say that it shall be remedied shortly."

Obscurely worried, she resumed her life. For one thing, the defect in the music irritated her. For another thing, she could not forget Kuno's speech. If he had known that the music was out of repair—he could not know it, for he detested music—if he had known that it was wrong, "the Machine stops" was exactly the venomous sort of remark he would have made. Of course he had made it at a venture, but the coincidence annoyed her, and she spoke with some petulance to the Committee of the Mending Apparatus.

They replied, as before, that the defect would be set right shortly.

"Shortly! At once!" she retorted. "Why should I be worried by imperfect music? Things are always put right at once. If you do not mend it at once, I shall complain to the Central Committee."

"No personal complaints are received by the Central Committee," the Committee of the Mending Apparatus replied.

"Through whom am I to make my complaint, then?"

"Through us."

## *The Machine Stops*

"I complain then."

"Your complaint shall be forwarded in its turn."

"Have others complained?"

This question was unmechanical, and the Committee of the Mending Apparatus refused to answer it.

"It is too bad!" she exclaimed to another of her friends. "There never was such an unfortunate woman as myself. I can never be sure of my music now. It gets worse and worse each time I summon it."

"I too have my troubles," the friend replied. "Sometimes my ideas are interrupted by a slight jarring noise."

"What is it?"

"I do not know whether it is inside my head, or inside the wall."

"Complain, in either case."

"I have complained, and my complaint will be forwarded in its turn to the Central Committee."

Time passed, and they resented the defects no longer. The defects had not been remedied, but the human tissues in that latter day had become so subservient, that they readily adapted themselves to every caprice of the Machine. The sigh at the crisis of the Brisbane symphony no longer irritated Vashti; she accepted it as part of the melody. The jarring noise, whether in the head or in the wall, was no longer resented by her friend. And so with the moldy artificial fruit, so with the bath water that began to stink, so with the defective rhymes that the poetry machine had taken to emit. All were bitterly complained of at first, and then acquiesced in and forgotten. Things went from bad to worse unchallenged.

It was otherwise with the failure of the sleeping apparatus. That was a more serious stoppage. There came a day when over the whole world—in Sumatra, in

Wessex, in the innumerable cities of Courland and Brazil—the beds, when summoned by their tired owners, failed to appear. It may seem a ludicrous matter, but from it we may date the collapse of humanity. The Committee responsible for the failure was assailed by complainants, whom it referred, as usual, to the Committee of the Mending Apparatus, who in its turn assured them that their complaints would be forwarded to the Central Committee. But the discontent grew, for mankind was not yet sufficiently adaptable to do without sleeping.

"Someone is meddling with the Machine—" they began.

"Someone is trying to make himself king, to reintroduce the personal element."

"Punish that man with Homelessness."

"To the rescue! Avenge the Machine! Avenge the Machine!"

"War! Kill the man!"

But the Committee of the Mending Apparatus now came forward, and allayed the panic with well-chosen words. It confessed that the Mending Apparatus was itself in need of repair.

The effect of this frank confession was admirable.

"Of course," said a famous lecturer—he of the French Revolution, who gilded each new decay with splendor—"of course we shall not press our complaints now. The Mending Apparatus has treated us so well in the past that we all sympathize with it, and will wait patiently for its recovery. In its own good time it will resume its duties. Meanwhile let us do without our beds, our tabloids, our other little wants. Such, I feel sure, would be the wish of the Machine."

Thousands of miles away his audience applauded. The Machine still linked them. Under the sea, beneath the roots of the

## *Twentieth Century Blues*

mountains, ran the wires through which they saw and heard, the enormous eyes and ears that were their heritage, and the hum of many workings clothed their thoughts in one garment of subservency. Only the old and the sick remained ungrateful, for it was rumored that Euthanasia, too, was out of order, and that pain had reappeared among men.

It became difficult to read. A blight entered the atmosphere and dulled its luminosity. At times Vashti could scarcely see across her room. The air, too, was foul. Loud were the complaints, impotent the remedies, heroic the tone of the lecturer as he cried: "Courage, courage! What matter so long as the Machine goes on? To it the darkness and the light are one." And though things improved again after a time, the old brilliancy was never recaptured, and humanity never recovered from its entrance into twilight. There was an hysterical talk of "measures," of "provisional dictatorship," and the inhabitants of Sumatra were asked to familiarize themselves with the workings of the central power station, the said power station being situated in France. But for the most part panic reigned, and men spent their strength praying to their Books, tangible proofs of the Machine's omnipotence. There were gradations of terror—at times came rumors of hope—the Mending Apparatus was almost mended—the enemies of the Machine had been got under—new "nerve-centers" were evolving which would do the work even more magnificently than before. But there came a day when, without the slightest warning, without any previous hint of feebleness, the entire communication-system broke down, all over the world, and the world, as they understood it, ended.

Vashti was lecturing at the time and her

earlier remarks had been punctuated with applause. As she proceeded the audience became silent, and at the conclusion there was no sound. Somewhat displeased, she called to a friend who was a specialist in sympathy. No sound: doubtless the friend was sleeping. And so with the next friend whom she tried to summon, and so with the next, until she remembered Kuno's cryptic remark, "The Machine stops."

The phrase still conveyed nothing. If Eternity was stopping it would of course be set going shortly.

For example, there was still a little light and air—the atmosphere had improved a few hours previously. There was still the Book, and while there was the Book there was security.

Then she broke down, for with the cessation of activity came an unexpected terror—silence.

She had never known silence, and the coming of it nearly killed her—it did kill many thousands of people outright. Ever since her birth she had been surrounded by the steady hum. It was to the ear what artificial air was to the lungs, and agonizing pains shot across her head. And scarcely knowing what she did, she stumbled forward and pressed the unfamiliar button, the one that opened the door of her cell.

Now the door of the cell worked on a simple hinge of its own. It was not connected with the central power station, dying far away in France. It opened, rousing immoderate hopes in Vashti, for she thought that the Machine had been mended. It opened, and she saw the dim tunnel that curved far away towards freedom. One look, and then she shrank back. For the tunnel was full of people—she was almost the last in that city to have taken alarm.

## *The Machine Stops*

People at any time repelled her, and these were nightmares from her worst dreams. People were crawling about, people were screaming, whimpering, gasping for breath, touching each other, vanishing in the dark, and ever and anon being pushed off the platform onto the live rail. Some were fighting round the electric bells, trying to summon trains which could not be summoned. Others were yelling for Euthanasia or for respirators, or blaspheming the Machine. Others stood at the doors of their cells fearing, like herself, either to stop in them or to leave them. And behind all the uproar was silence—the silence which is the voice of the earth and of the generations who have gone.

No—it was worse than solitude. She closed the door again and sat down to wait for the end. The disintegration went on, accompanied by horrible cracks and rumbling. The valves that restrained the Medical Apparatus must have been weakened, for it ruptured and hung hideously from the ceiling. The floor heaved and fell and flung her from her chair. A tube oozed towards her serpent fashion. And at last the final horror approached—light began to ebb, and she knew that civilization's long day was closing.

She whirled round, praying to be saved from this, at any rate, kissing the Book, pressing button after button. The uproar outside was increasing, and even penetrated the wall. Slowly the brilliancy of her cell was dimmed, the reflections faded from her metal switches. Now she could not see the reading-stand, now not the Book, though she held it in her hand. Light followed the flight of sound, air was following light, and the original void returned to the cavern from which it had been so long excluded. Vashti continued to whirl, like the devotees of an earlier

religion, screaming, praying, striking at the buttons with bleeding hands.

It was thus that she opened her prison and escaped—escaped in the spirit: at least so it seems to me; ere my meditation closes. That she escapes in the body—I cannot perceive that. She struck, by chance, the switch that released the door, and the rush of foul air on her skin, the loud throbbing whispers in her ears, told her that she was facing the tunnel again, and that tremendous platform on which she had seen men fighting. They were not fighting now. Only the whispers remained, and the little whimpering groans. They were dying by hundreds out in the dark.

She burst into tears.

Tears answered her.

They wept for humanity, those two, not for themselves. They could not bear that this should be the end. Ere silence was completed their hearts were opened, and they knew what had been important on the earth. Man, the flower of all flesh, the noblest of all creatures visible, man who had once made god in his image, and had mirrored his strength on the constellations, beautiful naked man was dying, strangled in the garments that he had woven. Century after century had he toiled, and here was his reward. Truly the garment had seemed heavenly at first, shot with the colors of culture, sewn with the threads of self-denial. And heavenly it had been so long as it was a garment and no more, so long as man could shed it at will and live by the essence that is his soul, and the essence, equally divine, that is his body. The sin against the body—it was for that they wept in chief; the centuries of wrong against the muscles and the nerves, and those five portals by which we can alone apprehend—glozing it over with talk of evolution, until the body was

## *Twentieth Century Blues*

white pap, the home of ideas as colorless, last sloshy stirrings of a spirit that had grasped the stars.

"Where are you?" she sobbed.

His voice in the darkness said, "Here."

"Is there any hope, Kuno?"

"None for us."

"Where are you?"

She crawled towards him over the bodies of the dead. His blood spurted over her hands.

"Quicker," he gasped, "I am dying—but we touch, we talk, not through the Machine."

He kissed her.

"We have come back to our own. We die; but we have recaptured life, as it was in Wessex, when Aelfrid overthrew the Danes. We know what they know outside, they who dwelt in the cloud that is the color of a pearl."

"But, Kuno, is it true? Are there still

men on the surface of the earth? Is this—this tunnel, this poisoned darkness—really not the end?"

He replied:

"I have seen them, spoken to them, loved them. They are hiding in the mist and the ferns until our civilization stops. Today they are the Homeless—tomorrow—"

"Oh, tomorrow—some fool will start the Machine again, tomorrow."

"Never," said Kuno, "never. Humanity has learnt its lesson."

As he spoke, the whole city was broken like a honeycomb. An air-ship had sailed in through the vomitory into a ruined wharf. It crashed downwards, exploding as it went, rending gallery after gallery with its wings of steel. For a moment they saw the nations of the dead, and, before they joined them, scraps of the untainted sky.

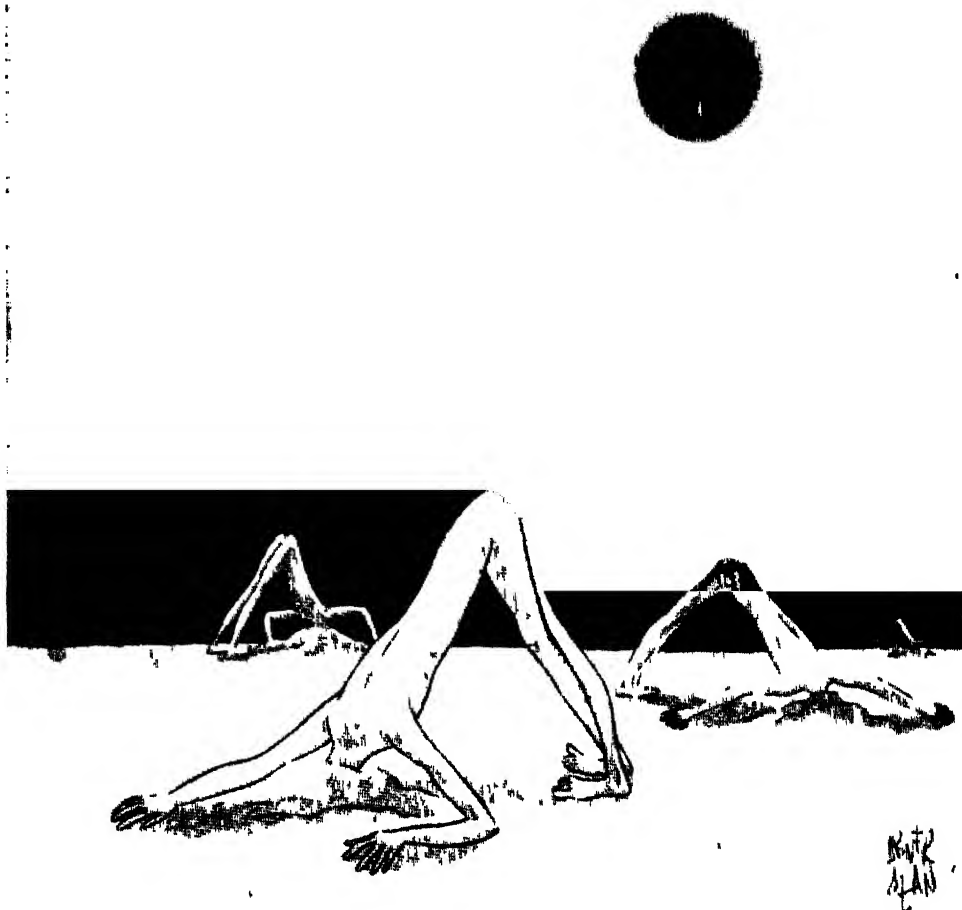
## PART IX · CREDOS FOR TODAY

IN A TIME of crisis we can bury our heads in a longing for the past or in thoughtlessness or in momentary amusement, and so gain a temporary escape, or we can resolve to deal as best we can with the problems which confront us. The individual cannot evade the realities and complexities of the modern world; he will, as Fearing implies, have to come out of his make-believe and face his world. To do so, he must get back to the simple reality of existence, which Cummings depicts, and slough off the unnecessary and impossible conventions in which that reality is now muffled.

Acceptance of things in the spirit of a Housman or a Robinson, which is not necessarily their condonement, is the first step toward understanding our situation. Such acceptance, Frost insists, depends on realizing one's self, not a fiction of the self, and selecting a "vantage point" amid the extremes of one's position. Then there is the need, as Millis shows, for joining with others to obtain the selfhood of the community and, as Shelley and Conrad maintain, for assuming responsibility and self-discipline for common ends. Self-mastery is first; its extension and completion demand the satisfaction of these further needs.

In meeting such a challenge, the individual is not so alone as his recent history has made it seem. As Sandburg and Spender show, he is with the great ones who have preceded our time; he is continuous with his ancestors. So, believing with Wolfe in the promise of the future, the self, and the country, reaffirming with Corwin the nature of our truths, he, and we, may cross over into the new geography of tomorrow. The new world may be ours in wisdom and love.





## Return to Normal

*From It's a long way to Heaven, copyright, 1945, by Abner Dean, and reproduced by permission of Rinehart & Company Inc., Publishers.*

## TRAVELOGUE IN A SHOOTING-GALLERY

by KENNETH FEARING

There is a jungle, there is a jungle, there is a vast, vivid, wild, wild, marvelous,  
marvelous, marvelous jungle,  
Open to the public during business hours,  
A jungle not very far from an Automat, between a hat store there, and a radio shop.

There, there, whether it rains, or it snows, or it shines,  
Under the hot, blazing, cloudless, tropical neon skies that the management always  
arranges there,  
Rows and rows of marching ducks, dozens and dozens and dozens of ducks, move  
steadily along on smoothly-oiled ballbearing feet,  
Ducks as big as telephone books, slow and fearless and out of this world,  
While lines and lines of lions, lions, rabbits, panthers, elephants, crocodiles, zebras,  
apes,  
Filled with jungle hunger and jungle rage and jungle love,  
Stalk their prey on endless, endless rotary belts through never-ending forests, and  
burning deserts, and limitless veldts,  
To the sound of tom-toms, equipped with silencers, beaten by thousands of savages  
hidden there.

And there it is that all the big game hunters go, there the traders and the explorers  
come,  
Leanfaced men with windswept eyes who arrive by streetcar, auto or subway, taxi  
or on foot, streetcar or bus,  
And they nod, and they say, and they need no more:  
"There . . . there . . .  
There they come and there they go."

And weighing machines, in this civilized jungle, will read your soul like an open  
book, for a penny at a time, and tell you all,  
There, there, where smoking is permitted,  
In a jungle that lies, like a rainbow's end, at the very end of every trail,  
There, in the only jungle in the whole wide world where ducks are waiting for  
streetcars,  
And hunters can be psychoanalyzed, while they smoke and wait for ducks.

From *Afternoon of a Pawnbroker and Other Poems*, copyright, 1943, by Kenneth Fearing. By  
permission of Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc. Originally appeared in *The New Yorker*.

## RECEPTION GOOD

by KENNETH FEARING

Now, at a particular spot on the radio dial, "—in this corner, wearing purple trunks,"  
Mingles, somehow, with the news that "—powerful enemy units have been surrounded in the drive—"

And both of these with the information that "—there is a way to avoid having  
chapped and roughened hands."

Such are the new and complex harmonies, it seems, of a strange and still more  
complex age;

It is not that the reception is confused or poor, but rather it is altogether too clear  
and good,

And no worse, in any case, than that other receiving set, the mind,  
Forever faithfully transmitting the great and little impulses that arrive, however  
wavering or loud, from near and far:

"It is an ill wind—" it is apt to report, underscoring this with "—the bigger they  
are the harder they fall," and simultaneously reminding, darkly, that "Things  
are seldom as they seem,"

Reconciling, with ease, the irreconcilable,

Piecing together fragments of a flashing past with clouded snapshots of the present  
and the future,

("Something old, something new," its irrelevant announcer states. "Something borrowed,  
something blue.")

Fashioning a raw, wild symphony of a wedding march, a drinking song, and a dirge,  
Multiplying enormous figures with precision, then raising the question: But after  
all, what is a man?

Somehow creating hope and fresh courage out of ancient doubt.

"Both boys are on their feet, they're going to it," the radio reports,

"—the sinking was attended by a heavy loss of life—"

"—this amazing cream for quick, miraculous results."

How many pieces are there, in a simple jigsaw puzzle?

How many phases of a man's life can crowd their way into a single moment?

How many angels, actually, can dance on the point of a pin?

From *Afternoon of a Pawnbroker and Other Poems*, copyright, 1943, by Kenneth Fearing. By  
permission of Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc.

# NOBODY LOSES ALL THE TIME

by E. E. CUMMINGS

nobody loses all the time

i had an uncle named  
Sol who was a born failure and  
nearly everybody said he should have gone  
into vaudeville perhaps because my Uncle

Sol could  
sing McCann He Was A Diver on Xmas  
Eve like Hell Itself which  
may or may not account for the fact that  
my Uncle

Sol indulged in that possibly most inexcusable  
of all to use a highfalootin phrase  
luxuries that is or to  
wit farming and be  
it needlessly  
added

my Uncle Sol's farm  
failed because the chickens  
ate the vegetables so  
my Uncle Sol had a  
chicken farm till the  
skunks ate the chickens when

my Uncle Sol  
had a skunk farm but  
the skunks caught cold and  
died so  
my Uncle Sol imitated the  
skunks in a subtle manner

or by drowning himself in the watertank  
but somebody who'd given my Uncle Sol  
a Victor  
Victrola and records while he lived presented to  
him upon the auspicious occasion of his  
decease a  
scrumptious not to mention splendiferous  
funeral with  
tall boys in black gloves and flowers and  
everything and

i remember we all cried like the Missouri  
when my Uncle Sol's coffin lurched because  
somebody pressed a button  
(and down went  
my Uncle  
Sol

and started a worm farm)

Copyright, 1926, by Horace Liveright. From: *Collected Poems*, published by Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc.

## IF YOU CAN'T EAT YOU GOT TO

by E. E. CUMMINGS

If you can't eat you got to  
smoke and we aint got  
nothing to smoke:come on kid

let's go to sleep  
if you can't smoke you got to

Sing and we aint got  
nothing to sing;come on kid  
let's go to sleep

if you can't sing you got to  
die and we aint got

Nothing to die,come on kid

let's go to sleep  
if you can't die you got to

dream and we aint got  
nothing to dream(come on kid

Let's go to sleep)

Reprinted by permission of the publishers, Duell, Sloan & Pearce Inc.

## SINCE FEELING IS FIRST

by E. E. CUMMINGS

since feeling is first  
who pays any attention  
to the syntax of things  
will never wholly kiss you;

wholly to be a fool  
while Spring is in the world

my blood approves,  
and kisses are a better fate

than wisdom  
lady i swear by all flowers. Don't cry  
—the best gesture of my brain is less than  
your eyelids' flutter which says

we are for each other: then  
laugh, leaning back in my arms  
for life's not a paragraph

And death i think is no parenthesis

Copyright, 1926, by Horace Liveright. From: *Collected Poems*, published by Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc.

## ANYONE LIVED IN A PRETTY HOW TOWN

by E. E. CUMMINGS

anyone lived in a pretty how town  
(with up so floating many bells down)

spring summer autumn winter  
he sang his didn't he danced his did.

Reprinted by permission of the publishers, Duell, Sloan & Pearce, Inc.

## *These Children Singing*

Women and men(both little and small)  
cared for anyone not at all  
they sowed their isn't they reaped their  
same  
sun moon stars rain

children guessed(but only a few  
and down they forgot as up they grew  
autumn winter spring summer)  
that noone loved him more by more

when by now and tree by leaf  
she laughed his joy she cried his grief  
bird by snow and stir by still  
anyone's any was all to her

someones married their everyones  
laughed their cryings and did their dance  
(sleep wake hope and then)they  
said their nevers they slept their dream

stars rain sun moon  
(and only the snow can begin to explain  
how children are apt to forget to re-  
member  
with up so floating many bells down)

one day anyone died i guess  
(and noone stooped to kiss his face)  
busy folk buried them side by side  
little by little and was by was

all by all and deep by deep  
and more by more they dream their sleep  
noone and anyone earth by april  
wish by spirit and if by yes.

Women and men(both dong and ding)  
summer autumn winter spring  
reaped their sowing and went their came  
sun moon stars rain

## THESE CHILDREN SINGING

*by E. E. CUMMINGS*

these children singing in stone a  
silence of stone these  
little children wound with stone  
flowers opening for

ever these silently lit  
tle children are petals  
their song is a flower of  
always their flowers

of stone are  
silently singing  
a song more silent  
than silence these always

children forever  
singing wreathed with singing  
blossoms children of  
stone with blossoming

eyes  
know if a  
lit tle  
tree listens

forever to always children singing forever  
a song made  
of silent as stone silence of  
song

Reprinted by permission of the publishers, Duell, Sloan & Pearce, Inc.

## LOVE IS MORE THICKER

by E. E. CUMMINGS

love is more thicker than forget  
more thinner than recall  
more seldom than a wave is wet  
more frequent than to fail

it is most mad and moonly  
and less it shall unbe  
than all the sea which only  
is deeper than the sea

love is less always than to win  
less never than alive  
less bigger than the least begin  
less littler than forgive

it is most sane and sunly  
and more it cannot die  
than all the sky which only  
is higher than the sky

Reprinted by permission of the publishers, Duell, Sloan & Pearce, Inc.

## LAW LIKE LOVE

by W. H. AUDEN

Law, say the gardeners, is the sun,  
Law is the one  
All gardeners obey  
Tomorrow, yesterday, today.

Law is the wisdom of the old  
The impotent grandfathers shrilly scold;  
The grandchildren put out a treble tongue,  
Law is the senses of the young.

Law, says the priest with a priestly look,  
Expounding to an unpriestly people,  
Law is the words in my priestly book,  
Law is my pulpit and my steeple.

Law, says the judge as he looks down his  
nose,  
Speaking clearly and most severely,  
Law is as I've told you before,  
Law is as you know I suppose,  
Law is but let me explain it once more,  
Law is The Law.

Yet law-abiding scholars write;  
Law is neither wrong nor right,  
Law is only crimes  
Punished by places and by times,  
Law is the clothes men wear  
Anytime, anywhere,  
Law is Good-morning and Good-night.

Others say, Law is our Fate;  
Others say, Law is our State;  
Others say, others say  
Law is no more  
Law has gone away.

And always the loud angry crowd  
Very angry and very loud  
Law is We,  
And always the soft idiot softly Me.

If we, dear, know we know no more  
Than they about the law,

From *The Collected Poetry of W. H. Auden*. Copyright, 1945, by W. H. Auden. Reprinted by permission of Random House, Inc.

## *The Chestnut Casts His Flambeaux*

If I no more than you  
Know what we should and should not do  
Except that all agree  
Gladly or miserably  
That the law is  
And that all know this,  
If therefore thinking it absurd  
To identify Law with some other word.  
Unlike so many men  
I cannot say Law is again,  
No more than they can we suppress  
The universal wish to guess

Or slip out of our own position  
Into an unconcerned condition.  
Although I can at least confine  
Your vanity and mine  
To stating timidly  
A timid similarity,  
We shall boast anyway:  
Like love I say.

Like love we don't know where or why  
Like love we can't compel or fly  
Like love we often weep  
Like love we seldom keep.

## THE LAWS OF GOD, THE LAWS OF MAN

*by* A. E. HOUSMAN

The laws of God, the laws of man,  
He may keep that will and can;  
Not I: let God and man decree  
Laws for themselves and not for me;  
And if my ways are not as theirs  
Let them mind their own affairs.  
Their deeds I judge and much condemn  
Yet when did I make laws for them?  
Please yourselves, say I, and they  
Need only look the other way.  
But no, they will not; they must still  
Wrest their neighbour to their will,

And make me dance as they desire  
With jail and gallows and hell-fire.  
And how am I to face the odds  
Of man's bedevilment and God's?  
I, a stranger and afraid  
In a world I never made.  
They will be master, right or wrong;  
Though both are foolish, both are strong.  
And since, my soul, we cannot fly  
To Saturn nor to Mercury,  
Keep we must, if keep we can,  
These foreign laws of God and man.

## THE CHESTNUT CASTS HIS FLAMBEAUX

*by* A. E. HOUSMAN

The chestnut casts his flambeaux, and the flowers  
Stream from the hawthorn on the wind away,  
The doors clap to, the pane is blind with showers.  
Pass me the can, lad; there's an end of May.

These poems from A. E. Housman, *Last Poems*, Henry Holt and Company, Inc.



## *Credos for Today*

There's one spoilt spring to scant our mortal lot,  
One season ruined of our little store.  
May will be fine next year as like as not:  
Oh ay, but then we shall be twenty-four.

We for a certainty are not the first  
Have sat in taverns while the tempest hurled  
Their hopeful plans to emptiness, and cursed  
Whatever brute and blackguard made the world.

It is in truth iniquity on high  
To cheat our sentenced souls of aught they crave,  
And mar the merriment as you and I  
Fare on our long fool's-errand to the grave.

Iniquity it is; but pass the can.  
My lad, no pair of kings our mothers bore;  
Our only portion is the estate of man:  
We want the moon, but we shall get no more.

If here to-day the cloud of thunder lours  
To-morrow it will hie on far behests;  
The flesh will grieve on other bones than ours  
Soon, and the soul will mourn in other breasts.

The troubles of our proud and angry dust  
Are from eternity, and shall not fail.  
Bear them we can, and if we can we must.  
Shoulder the sky, my lad, and drink your ale.

## “TERENCE, THIS IS STUPID STUFF”

*by* A. E. HOUSMAN

“Terence, this is stupid stuff:  
You eat your victuals fast enough;  
There can't be much amiss, 'tis clear,  
To see the rate you drink your beer.  
But oh, good Lord, the verse you make,  
It gives a chap the belly-ache.  
The cow, the old cow, she is dead;  
It sleeps well, the hornèd head:  
We poor lads, 'tis our turn now  
To hear such tunes as killed the cow.

Pretty friendship 'tis to rhyme  
Your friends to death before their time  
Moping melancholy mad:  
Come, pipe a tune to dance to, lad.”

Why, if 'tis dancing you would be,  
There's brisker pipes than poetry.  
Say, for what were hop-yards meant,  
Or why was Burton built on Trent?  
Oh many a peer of England brews  
Livelier liquor than the Muse,

From A. E. Housman, *A Shropshire Lad*, Henry Holt and Company, Inc.

## *Captain Craig*

And malt does more than Milton can  
To justify God's ways to man.  
Ale, man, ale's the stuff to drink  
For fellows whom it hurts to think:  
Look into the pewter pot  
To see the world as the world's not.  
And faith, 'tis pleasant till 'tis past:  
The mischief is that 'twill not last.  
Oh I have been to Ludlow fair  
And left my necktie God knows where,  
And carried half-way home, or near,  
Pints and quarts of Ludlow beer:  
Then the world seemed none so bad,  
And I myself a sterling lad;  
And down in lovely muck I've lain,  
Happy till I woke again.  
Then I saw the morning sky:  
Heigho, the tale was all a lie;  
The world, it was the old world yet,  
I was I, my things were wet,  
And nothing now remained to do  
But begin the game anew.

Therefore, since the world has still  
Much good, but much less good than ill,  
And while the sun and moon endure  
Luck's a chance, but trouble's sure,  
I'd face it as a wise man would,  
And train for ill and not for good.

'Tis true, the stuff I bring for sale  
Is not so brisk a brew as ale:  
Out of a stem that scored the hand  
I wrung it in a weary land.  
But take it: if the smack is sour,  
The better for the embittered hour;  
It should do good to heart and head  
When your soul is in my soul's stead;  
And I will friend you, if I may,  
In the dark and cloudy day.

There was a king reigned in the East:  
There, when kings will sit to feast,  
They get their fill before they think  
With poisoned meat and poisoned drink.  
He gathered all that springs to birth  
From the many-venomed earth;  
First a little, thence to more,  
He sampled all her killing store;  
And easy, smiling, seasoned sound,  
Sate the king when healths went round.  
They put arsenic in his meat  
And stared aghast to watch him eat;  
They poured strychnine in his cup  
And shook to see him drink it up:  
They shook, they stared as white's their  
shirt:  
Them it was their poison hurt.  
—I tell the tale that I heard told.  
Mithridates, he died old.

*from* CAPTAIN CRAIG

*by* EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON

"I, Captain Craig, abhorred iconoclast,  
Sage-errant, favored of the Mysteries,  
And self-reputed humorist at large,  
Do now, confessed of my world-worship-  
ing,  
Time-questioning, sun-fearing, and heart-  
yielding,  
Approve and unreservedly devise

To you and your assigns for evermore,  
God's universe and yours. If I had won  
What first I sought, I might have made  
you beam  
By giving less; but now I make you laugh  
By giving more than what had made you  
beam,  
And it is well. No man has ever done

From E. A. Robinson, *Collected Poems*. By permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers.

## *Credos for Today*

The deed of humor that God promises,  
But now and then we know tragedians  
Reform, and in denial too divine  
For sacrifice, too firm for ecstasy,  
Record in letters, or in books they write,  
What fragment of God's humor they have  
caught,

What earnest of its rhythm; and I believe  
That I, in having somewhat recognized  
The formal measure of it, have endured  
The discord of infirmity no less  
Through fortune than by failure. What  
men lose

Man gains; and what man gains reports  
itself

In losses we but vaguely deprecate,  
So they be not for us;—and this is right,  
Except that when the devil in the sun  
Misguides us we go darkly where the shine  
Misleads us, and we know not what we  
see:

We know not if we climb or if we fall;  
And if we fly, we know not where we fly.

"And here do I insert an urging clause  
For climbers and up-fliers of all sorts,  
Cliff-climbers and high-fliers: Phaethon,  
Bellerophon, and Icarus did each  
Go gloriously up, and each in turn  
Did famously come down—as you have  
read

In poems and elsewhere; but other men

Have mounted where no fame has fol-  
lowed them,  
And we have had no sight, no news of  
them,

And we have heard no crash. The crash  
may count,

Undoubtedly, and earth be fairer for it;  
Yet none save creatures out of harmony  
Have ever, in their fealty to the flesh,  
Made crashing an ideal. It is the flesh  
That ails us, for the spirit knows no  
qualm,

No failure, no down-falling: so climb  
high,

And having set your steps regard not  
much

The downward laughter clinging at your  
feet,

Nor overmuch the warning; only know,  
As well as you know dawn from lantern-  
light,

That far above you, for you, and within  
you,

There burns and shines and lives, un-  
wavering

And always yours, the truth. Take on  
yourself

But your sincerity, and you take on  
Good promise for all climbing: fly for  
truth,

And hell shall have no storm to crush your  
flight,

No laughter to vex down your loyalty."

## TO A THINKER

*by* ROBERT FROST

The last step taken found your heft  
Decidedly upon the left.  
One more would throw you on the right.  
Another still—you see your plight.

You call this thinking, but it's walking.  
Not even that, it's only rocking,  
Or weaving like a stabled horse:  
From force to matter and back to force,

The poems on pages 772-777 from Robert Frost, *Collected Poems*, Henry Holt and Company, Inc.

## *The Vantage Point*

From form to content and back to form,  
From norm to crazy and back to norm,  
From bound to free and back to bound,  
From sound to sense, and back to sound.  
So back and forth. It almost scares  
A man the way things come in pairs.  
Just now you're off democracy  
(With a polite regret to be),  
And leaning on dictatorship;  
But if you will accept the tip,  
In less than no time, tongue and pen,  
You'll be a democrat again.  
A reasoner and good as such,  
Don't let it bother you too much

If it makes you look helpless please  
And a temptation to the tease.  
Suppose you've no direction in you,  
I don't see but you must continue  
To use the gift you do possess,  
And sway with reason more or less.  
I own I never really warmed  
To the reformer or reformed,  
And yet conversion has its place  
Not half way down the scale of grace.  
So if you find you must repent  
From side to side in argument,  
At least don't use your mind too hard,  
But trust my instinct—I'm a bard.

## THE VANTAGE POINT

*by* ROBERT FROST

If tired of trees I seek again mankind,  
Well I know where to hie me—in the dawn,  
To a slope where the cattle keep the lawn.  
There amid lolling juniper reclined,  
Myself unseen, I see in white defined  
Far off the homes of men, and farther still,  
The graves of men on an opposing hill,  
Living or dead, whichever are to mind.

And if by noon I have too much of these,  
I have but to turn on my arm, and lo,  
The sun-burned hillside sets my face aglow,  
My breathing shakes the bluet like a breeze,  
I smell the earth, I smell the bruised plant,  
I look into the crater of the ant.

## A DRUMLIN WOODCHUCK

*by* ROBERT FROST

One thing has a shelving bank,  
Another a rotting plank,  
To give it cozier skies  
And make up for its lack of size.

My own strategic retreat  
Is where two rocks almost meet,  
And still more secure and snug,  
A two-door burrow I dug.

With those in mind at my back  
I can sit forth exposed to attack  
As one who shrewdly pretends  
That he and the world are friends.

All we who prefer to live  
Have a little whistle we give,  
And flash, at the least alarm  
We dive down under the farm.

We allow some time for guile  
And don't come out for a while  
Either to eat or drink.  
We take occasion to think.

And if after the hunt goes past  
And the double-barrelled blast  
(Like war and pestilence  
And the loss of common sense),

If I can with confidence say  
That still for another day,  
Or even another year,  
I will be there for you, my dear,

It will be because, though small  
As measured against the All,  
I have been so instinctively thorough  
About my crevice and burrow.

## STOPPING BY WOODS ON A SNOWY EVENING

*by* ROBERT FROST

Whose woods these are I think I know.  
His house is in the village though;  
He will not see me stopping here  
To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer  
To stop without a farmhouse near  
Between the woods and frozen lake  
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake  
To ask if there is some mistake.  
The only other sound's the sweep  
Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep.  
But I have promises to keep,  
And miles to go before I sleep,  
And miles to go before I sleep.

## NEITHER OUT FAR NOR IN DEEP

*by* ROBERT FROST

The people along the sand  
All turn and look one way.  
They turn their back on the land.  
They look at the sea all day.

As long as it takes to pass  
A ship keeps raising its hull;  
The wetter ground like glass  
Reflects a standing gull.

The land may vary more;  
But wherever the truth may be—  
The water comes ashore,  
And the people look at the sea.

They cannot look out far.  
They cannot look in deep.  
But when was that ever a bar  
To any watch they keep?

## MENDING WALL

*by* ROBERT FROST

Something there is that doesn't love a wall,  
That sends the frozen-ground-swell under it,  
And spills the upper boulders in the sun;  
And makes gaps even two can pass abreast.  
The work of hunters is another thing:  
I have come after them and made repair  
Where they have left not one stone on a stone,  
But they would have the rabbit out of hiding,  
To please the yelping dogs. The gaps I mean,  
No one has seen them made or heard them made,  
But at spring mending-time we find them there.  
I let my neighbour know beyond the hill;  
And on a day we meet to walk the line  
And set the wall between us once again.  
We keep the wall between us as we go.  
To each the boulders that have fallen to each.  
And some are loaves and some so nearly balls  
We have to use a spell to make them balance:  
"Stay where you are until our backs are turned!"  
We wear our fingers rough with handling them.  
Oh, just another kind of out-door game,  
One on a side. It comes to little more:  
There where it is we do not need the wall:  
He is all pine and I am apple orchard.

### *Credos for Today*

My apple trees will never get across  
And eat the cones under his pines, I tell him.  
He only says, "Good fences make good neighbours."  
Spring is the mischief in me, and I wonder  
If I could put a notion in his head:  
"Why do they make good neighbours? Isn't it  
Where there are cows? But here there are no cows.  
Before I built a wall I'd ask to know  
What I was walling in or walling out,  
And to whom I was like to give offence.  
Something there is that doesn't love a wall,  
That wants it down." I could say "Elves" to him,  
But it's not elves exactly, and I'd rather  
He said it for himself. I see him there,  
Bringing a stone grasped firmly by the top  
In each hand, like an old-stone savage armed.  
He moves in darkness as it seems to me,  
Not of woods only and the shade of trees.  
He will not go behind his father's saying,  
And he likes having thought of it so well  
He says again, "Good fences make good neighbours."

### THERE ARE ROUGHLY ZONES

*by* ROBERT FROST

We sit indoors and talk of the cold outside.  
And every gust that gathers strength and heaves  
Is a threat to the house. But the house has long been tried.  
We think of the tree. If it never again has leaves,  
We'll know, we say, that this was the night it died.  
It is very far north, we admit, to have brought the peach.  
What comes over a man, is it soul or mind—  
That to no limits and bounds he can stay confined?  
You would say his ambition was to extend the reach  
Clear to the Arctic of every living kind.  
Why is his nature forever so hard to teach  
That though there is no fixed line between wrong and right,  
There are roughly zones whose laws must be obeyed.  
There is nothing much we can do for the tree tonight,  
But we can't help feeling more than a little betrayed

## *The Faith of an American*

That the northwest wind should rise to such a height  
Just when the cold went down, so many below.  
The tree has no leaves and may never have them again.  
We must wait till some months hence in the spring to know.  
But if it is destined never again to grow,  
It can blame this limitless trait in the hearts of men.

## ACQUAINTED WITH THE NIGHT

by ROBERT FROST

I have been one acquainted with the night.	I have stood still and stopped the sound of feet
I have walked out in rain—and back in rain.	When far away an interrupted cry Came over houses from another street,
I have outwalked the furthest city light.	
I have looked down the saddest city lane.	But not to call me back or say good-bye; And further still at an unearthly height, One luminary clock against the sky
I have passed by the watchman on his beat.	Proclaimed the time was neither wrong nor right.
And dropped my eyes, unwilling to ex- plain.	I have been one acquainted with the night.

## THE FAITH OF AN AMERICAN

by WALTER MILLIS

WHAT FOLLOWS is an essay in autobiography. While a generation of young Europeans was growing up amid the catastrophes which Erika Mann describes, a generation of young Americans was finding itself more distantly involved in the same historic processes. We looked on, more or less consciously, at the European revolution; more or less consciously we saw our own notions of society and our convictions about our world shaped or modified by its dimly apprehended lessons. We, also, made our mistakes; though so far they have exacted less ferocious penalties. We, also, learned something perhaps by experience, and though it is true that one's own experience will never teach another, an account of how many of us thought

From *Zero Hour: A Summons to the Free*, by Stephen Vincent Benét, Erika Mann, McGeorge Bundy, William L. White, Garrett Underhill and Walter Millis, copyright, 1940, by Rinehart & Company, Inc., and reprinted by their permission.



and felt under the impact of the great changes of the past quarter of a century may be not without its interest for those younger men and women who have so often cited us as supporting witnesses—or as horrible examples.

How far I may be typical of what came to be called the "Lost Generation" I do not know. Precisely because I bear so few of the conventional stigmata, I may actually be more typical than one would suspect. So far as I know, I was never "lost"; but then, very few of my contemporaries seem to have been either. Though I was in uniform during the World War, I never saw a battle; and though I was in Paris from time to time after it, I never sat at length with Hemingway expatriates on the terrace of the Dome or the Select, engaging in endless, monosyllabic dialogues in disillusion. But in these things I suspect that I am by no means unique. I have had much less direct experience of war than many of my age; to some extent, however, this is counterbalanced by the fact that my professional interests have required me to read and think about it rather more, probably, than most. War, at all events, has formed the ultimate background of my entire active life. Either in its prosecution or its preparation, in its physical horrors or its broader social implications, it has constituted a framework dimly surrounding all other activities, affecting every idea of the purposes of our society, limiting in one way or another every vista of the international or domestic scene. And in this I am not different from any other American in his or her early forties.

The first impact of war on my own consciousness was the romantic one. I was fifteen when the Great War broke over Europe; and it broke with a glamor which the present struggle can scarcely exercise,

I imagine, over any fifteen-year-old of today. The vast present literature of mud-and-blood did not then exist. I had seen pictures of contorted corpses in *The Photographic History of the Civil War*; but that work, vivid as it was, conveyed nothing like the pain and futility which darken every page of Stallings' *First World War*. The soldier of my imagination was still a Kipling or a Richard Harding Davis character; and though something of the horrors might look out occasionally through what I had read about the Napoleonic, the Civil or the Spanish-American conflicts, they had been long dimmed by time.

Boys of the same age today have had, I suppose, a much sounder education in the grim subject. I got mine slowly, and with what now seems to be an almost incredible naïveté—until I realize that this very naïveté, which was a product of the censorships and which was shared by grown men and women as well as by children, was one of the significant differences between those times and these. Up until the very end, when the Armistice found me just finishing my preliminary training and with a very raw second lieutenant's commission in my locker trunk, I had never, in all my imaginings as to what "it" would really be like, achieved any picture remotely approaching the reality. Something of the glamor of militarism persisted; and I remember my own shock when, proudly presenting myself to my mother, as a "surprise," in my new officer's uniform, I suddenly saw by her face that to her it was like my death warrant. I had not thought of that side of the matter. I was still picturing myself as a story-book soldier. I was still imagining myself swinging a field battery into action with all the dash and drama of a parade-ground maneuver. I was as raw as that.

## *The Faith of an American*

But I was not carried away by what afterward came to be called "war hysteria." Perhaps some of my classmates were. A number dropped out early to join up for active service; one or two were killed, several others made war records of great distinction. I wondered a little at the time as to the exact motives by which they were impelled—and I still wonder occasionally. Partly, perhaps, they were swept away by the excitement and the propaganda. But others of us, even then, entertained our doubts; and they were no different from the doubts besetting younger people today. I was, of course, afraid; I may have had no conception of what the Great War was really like, but by 1917 hints were beginning to come through the censorships. If there was still a great deal of the Arthur Guy Empey kind of literature about, there was also Barbusse by that time and a terrible little book, *Men in War*, by the Hungarian, Latzko. I was afraid of being afraid. And I was skeptical. No one with the slightest bent toward an analytical attitude could fail to feel that the propagandas were overdone, the causes of the war obscure, its promised gains uncertain. We were all "liberals" in those days, and believers in the rational life. I remember my inner conviction—running like a thread under the "Squads right!" and the nomenclature of the three-inch field gun—that no people could possibly be so wholly given to rapine and slaughter as the Germans were represented as being. The immediate cause of the American entry into the war—the submarine campaign, which had actually taken only a handful of American lives—seemed somehow inadequate; the menace of a German invasion of the United States, with which this cause was buttressed, seemed farfetched and always rather un-

convincing; the greater aims of winning a war to end war and of making the world safe for democracy were much more moving—but I remember that I doubted even then whether they would in fact be realized.

So far as I can recall, it was no sense of burning consecration, no fanatical devotion to a leader or a cause, which overbore these rational doubts and carried me down a path which, save for the ending of the war, would have dropped me unresisting into the agony of the Western Front. It was, rather, a matter of drifting with the tide. I was simply one of my kind, doing as they did, accepting the role for which the social framework of which I was a part had cast me. I did not offer myself heroically before I was called; I never, on the other hand, had any impulse toward the part of a conscientious objector. Possibly I was politically and socially more immature than the better-educated youths of today. Afterwards, at any rate, it seemed to me that this was an irrational and unsatisfactory way in which to go down into the terrible vortex of modern war. To enlist for killing without a deep conviction—or without a signed, sealed and delivered contract to guarantee that the sacrifice would be worth while—seemed the height of foolishness; to offer up one's life to a cause simply for the reason, at bottom, that everyone else was doing it seemed a grotesquely childish proceeding. So it often appeared to me afterward. But today I am not so sure; and much of what follows is by way of explaining why I am not sure.

What kind of soldier I would have made, with this emotional equipment, I was never to learn. At the time I hoped that I would do my duty when the crises came; I still hope that I would have done

it. I do not know. But in general (neglecting whatever personal reactions the stress of battle might have brought out in myself) it seems to me that this way of going to war is not a bad foundation for the soldierly virtues. I suspect that men who have enlisted because everyone else is doing it—because, in other words, there is a group job to be done and they are part of their group—are better equipped to stick it in the long run than men driven by such suicidal fanaticisms as the Nazis inculcate in their shock troops, or even than men impelled by great ideals which, in this imperfect world, are nearly always doomed to stultification. I suspect that the front-line soldier who fights because he is there, because his immediate comrades are fighting, because he cannot let down the squad on his left or right or abandon the infantry being covered by his tank guns, will fight better and longer than those guided by less simple, more lofty, more logical and therefore more vulnerable motives. This is, of course, no answer to the question of whether one should fight at all or not. But it contains, perhaps, a hint of the answer. And I found a similar hint in my own feelings as I looked back on it after the war was over. I never for a moment regretted the fact that chance had spared me the suffering and horrors of the battlefield; I was never bothered (even in the earlier post-war days, before we had all grown so cynical over the results) by the thought that I had struck no blows for the new world of peace and democracy. But what I did regret, even while I was glad that I had escaped, was that I had missed one of the great experiences of my generation. An immense and terrible task was performed by my contemporaries. I would have liked to have had a share in the doing of it, quite regardless of what

was done. It was a part of the heritage of my age, of the society, the group, in which and by which I lived. I would not have done it for fun; but since, historically, it had to be done, I would have liked to have had a share in it. And therein there lies a real hint, I think, not only of the reason why men do fight but of the reason why, at times, they should.

But none of us was thinking about fighting again in those days. We had all suddenly been dumped out into the peace of 1919. The war to end war had been won at last—and for millions of men and women it really had been a war to end war, in spite of all the cheap sneers that have since been flung at that phrase—while few even of the most skeptical among us could have imagined that in fact they would ever live to see another like it. Some of us, as I have said, had found out in the hard way what modern war really is; the rest of us were soon to learn. I forget when Philip Gibbs' *Now It Can Be Told* first blossomed in the bookstores, but no one who had reached the age of literacy in the earlier nineteen-twenties is ever likely to forget the long and terrible procession of the war books which followed on its heels. Perhaps they made a deeper impression upon those who had not been there than upon those who had. I am rather struck by the fact that among men of my acquaintance it is those who saw active service in the last war who are, as a rule, the strongest supporters of a bold foreign policy today and the most ready to risk their lives again if such a policy should fail to avert a conflict; while the man who has made himself the chief national spokesman of the policy of appeasement, safety and scuttle is Colonel Lindbergh, who was too young to take part in the last struggle. But the World

## *The Faith of an American*

War as experienced either directly or in the vast testimonial of pain and courage, horror, suffering, fortitude, weariness and disillusion which it produced, has left on all men and women of my age an impression which is ineradicable.

It is not surprising that for so many of us the strongest impulse that we brought to the consideration of our times and our society was the impulse springing from the simple conviction that this sort of unutterable barbarity should never happen again. In Jules Romain's *Verdun*—one of the best of all the war books, even though it came, or possibly because it came, long after the main mass had been read and buried away in the back of the mind—there is wrung from one of the characters the exclamation that nothing—*nothing*—could be worth all the suffering which he feels and sees around him. But it was not only the suffering, recorded on so many sensitive and courageous pages as well as upon those of the hysterical, of the radical propagandists, or of the merely prurient horror-merchants. Scattered through this great literature—the record of the first major war to be fought by armies almost universally literate and therefore able to record it—were books of another and in a way more dreadful kind. There was, for example, Colonel Repington's chatty, guileless account of the "inside" war—the war of gossip and intrigue, of cozy little tea parties and dinners among the great at which the lives of thousands were juggled on a clever remark, the war of petty ambitions, callousnesses, stupidities, all going on at the centers of power and command while men were dying not far away. There were books like Corday's diary of *The Paris Front*, with its bitterer, more adult cynicism and disillusion, its more acid picture of doubt and uncertainty in the ranks,

of selfishness and smallness at the top. The suffering was bad enough. It was what had apparently gone on behind the suffering that made it worse. What, really, had it all been about? What were the real ends which this immense crucifixion of an age had served?

If the war raised the question, in the peace we seemed to have our answer. There were greed and littleness, silly nationalism, paltry personal ambition and plain unwisdom at Paris; and the Treaty of Versailles certainly was not perfect. But for me, and I imagine for a great many of my generation, it was not the Treaty, not anything which happened at Paris, that produced the real disillusion. It was what happened afterward. The statesmen may have been greedy and unwise; it was as nothing compared to the greed and folly and blindness of the peoples who were to pass upon their work. Many have now come to realize that the Treaty of Versailles, for all its faults, was in fact a much greater and nobler document than it was represented as being in the post-war years. But we younger people believed in the Treaty in 1920; most of us, I think, believed in the Covenant and the League, and in the new vistas which Wilson's high rhetoric had opened before us. Our elders pointed out the Treaty's faults. We were not impressed by them. We wanted to accept the great risks; we wanted to help build the new, warless world in which democratic institutions would not only be safe but would demonstrate a creative power beyond anything they had shown before. And we saw this vision dissipated before our eyes by a complicated, somehow grotesque, process which we did not understand. We saw it tangled in a partisan political battle about which most of us cared very little. We saw it picked elab-

orately to pieces by the destructive fingers of legalistic nicety, we saw it involved in absurd disputes about "the" League or "a" league; in manifestoes and reservations; in every kind of passionate inanity, sincere or otherwise. In the end, we did not quite know what had happened. We blamed it on the obstinacy of Wilson or the petty jealousy of Lodge; we wondered whether perhaps we had not been wrong ourselves, or ascribed the whole thing to the mere accidents of politics, to a malevolent chance. But the vision was dead, all right; there was no doubt about that, and not much doubt that, whatever personal contributions the politicians and editors had made to its destruction, it was the people themselves who had let it die. The steam had gone out of them. The ardor had evaporated. They could fight, suffer and win a war; they could put their victory to no intelligible purpose. They fled into "normalcy." They wanted to be let alone; to mumble all the old, easy shibboleths of patriotism and politics and economic reaction.

So it had all been for nothing. The speeches and flag-waving had been meaningless, or had meant only a barren and outworn kind of jingo patriotism. We may not have gone to war *for* an ideal, but an ideal had at least illuminated our course and given it the appearance of reasonableness. This ideal had vanished; in its place we had Warren G. Harding. It was not simply that the ideal had been betrayed by politicians or sold by evil men; it had been abandoned by the whole society of which we were a part. We were told by our elders, including those of unquestioned integrity and eminence, that to imagine that it was possible to eliminate war from international society or create a new world order was to betray a childish

naïveté, not to mention a gross ignorance of the Constitution. We supposed that we had been fighting, or preparing to fight, for peace and democracy; it was an absurd notion—what we had really been fighting for was to take vengeance on the Germans for having sunk a few American ships and killed a small number of American citizens, most of whom had been fully warned of their danger. That was a real cause for war. The rest was a windy and impracticable "idealism," which could only affect inexperienced minds. We believed this, most of us—how could we have done otherwise? We might not have believed a Lodge, or even a Borah. But the election returns were unanswerable. The election returns were us; they were the voice of the society in which we were framed, by which alone we had our public existence. So it had all been, somehow, a mistake.

With this lesson, or what we could only read as this lesson, we were dumped into the post-war world; and, as I have said, it is not surprising if a good many of us felt that in the elimination of this pointless horror from society there lay the first, the central, problem of our times. The post-war world was in fact a much more confusing place than we knew. Its manners, its politics, its economy alike were in a much greater state of flux than we realized; the ancient issues between the individual and the state, between man and his society, were running so very deep that most of us were but dimly aware that there were any such issues at all. It was easy to fall victim to over-simple solutions. No doubt too many men and women of my generation relapsed into the simplest solution of all; they adopted a purely personal attitude toward their times, took what the day brought, voted the Democratic ticket or the Republican, tried to make a living and

## *The Faith of an American*

let it go at that. Of those troubled by a more restless impulse to understand their age, some simply forgot about the war and—taking up again at the point where everything had been dropped in 1914—concentrated their attention on all the old social issues, political reform, industrial relations, problems of economic and financial organization. But to others among us it seemed as if all that could wait. We forgot about society and concentrated our attention on war.

This loathsome atrocity, appalling in itself, destructive of all social values, with so much seeming baseness in its inspiration and futility in its results—this thing, surely, would have to be done away with. This, surely, was the one greatest scourge to which our civilization was still subject, more terrible than poverty, more crushing than injustice, productive of more waste and misery and degradation than all the special ills which formed the stuff of peace-time socio-economic controversy. So a good many of us felt; and we attacked our enemy in our several ways. Some, like Hemingway or Dos Passos or Stallings, reported the horror as they had seen it with a passionate and convincing indignation. Some—Sherwood comes to mind—used the weapons of satire. Some journeyed to Geneva in Shotwell's trail; they gave themselves to the effort of reviving the war-time inspiration, of breathing life into the League of Nations, of elaborating new legal formulae—"outlawries of war," "collective securities," perfected "peace systems"—in which to bind the monster. Others, like Buell, founded or labored in study associations, tried to stimulate thought or spread information, wrote monographs, compiled statistics. It was a war on a wide front. The historical process had demonstrated to us that the origi-

nal war against war for which we had enlisted had not really been that at all; we had simply allowed ourselves to be bamboozled by the propagandas. But, as Keynes once said of Wilson, we refused to be de-bamboozled. This was our own war against war. Events have proved that it was a misdirected one. But none, I think, who took however small a part in it need be ashamed of having done so.

I had a part in it; I do not pretend that it was a particularly important one, but this is admittedly autobiography. I am using myself simply as an illustration to show that the men and women of the "war generation" have in their own way been through most of the dilemmas that appear to trouble their immediate successors; whatever we may say now is at any rate not said in ignorance of those issues or blindness toward them. Like these others in the middle post-war years I was fascinated by the subject of war; I loathed the business; I thought an attack upon it as good a point as any other at which to attack the general problem of our times. Most of the excuses advanced to justify militaristic preparation and war-like policies seemed to me obviously shallow—the transparent rationalizations of people either blinded by their vested interest in military institutions or incapable of taking more than a childishly narrow, romantic view of human history. I remember the disgust with which I followed for example, the antics of the "Coolidge" naval conference in 1927, at which unthinking jingo nationalism, professional navalist pedantry and a total failure to bring any scientific analysis to the question of what the proposed ships were really for or really capable of doing, succeeded—not, it may be said, without the assistance of the munitions interests—in

wrecking any chance of completing the structure of naval limitation which had been begun at Washington in 1921. I was as critical as most of military measures, military appropriations, the whole inspiration and purpose of the military institution. And it occurred to me to write my own kind of book about war.

It was in 1931 that I published a book called *The Martial Spirit*. It was an account of the Spanish-American War, written partly because this seemed to me in itself, a curious and arresting episode in the development of contemporary America, but partly, also, because it seemed a suggestive example of the war process in action. I was inclined to think of war as a disease or aberration of normal society; and though the whole emphasis of this book was satiric rather than solemn, I felt that it might be of use as a kind of practical case-history. Precisely because the scale of the Spanish-American War was small, the physical horrors relatively few, but the historical consequences considerable, it should offer a better subject in which to study the essential pathology than the vaster, more complex and more terrible examples. The book did not go unread. But if it was a case history, it never suggested to me—nor to anyone else so far as I am aware—any hint of the cure.

Perhaps war was not, as I and many others had tended to regard it, a disease of society. Perhaps it was not even a crime, as the authors of the Treaty of Versailles had assumed and as the earnest workers in the Geneva vineyards still seemed to assume. Perhaps it was a stupidity—a failure in logic and sense on the part of peoples and their responsible statesmen, a vast accident compounded out of short-sightedness, ignorance, the inability to relate means to end or cause to effect. So, at any

rate, the outbreak of war in 1914 seemed to have been, as it was now appearing to us through the researches of Fay and the other scholars of the "origins." I was struck by the fact that I did not know either how or why the United States had got into the war in 1917; I was even more struck by the fact that no one else seemed to know either. Plenty of people had their explanations, of course, but the explanations were all different; there were any number of reasons, but when they were all added up they did not come to anything very reasonable. I decided that I would try to find out, to my own satisfaction at any rate; and I went to work upon another book, the primary purpose of which was simply to give as full, as intelligible and self-consistent an account as I could of the "origins" of the American intervention.

Again it seemed to me that the attempt might yield a book which would not only be of interest in itself but would be useful. I felt that one great trouble with everyone dabbling in this subject—from the peace-society people at one end with their simple denunciations of war around through the Geneva legalists with their protocols and "peace systems" to the soldiers, whose one prescription was more armaments to preserve the peace—was that they all had an inadequate grasp of the actual process which they were trying to control. They were, so to speak, proposing to regulate a watch with no more imaginative an understanding of its anatomy than could be derived from a cursory glance at the movement. Each was so sure that they knew how the watch ought to work, and therefore how to regulate it, that none was taking time to find out whether the watch really did work that way. In the case of the American inter-

## *The Faith of an American*

vention in 1917, I wanted to find out how the watch had actually ticked, what had made it go, what kind of mechanisms were involved. Except for a powerful bias against avoidable wars, I really had no bias in this endeavor; I was not committed to any single theory of the war's causation, but I did hope that from a survey of the war mechanisms as a whole there might emerge some practical hints as to how to control these mechanisms—if not for the complete prevention of war, then at least so as to insure that they would yield less socially futile results than seemed to have been achieved in this case.

It was not our entry in the war which I minded so much; it was what I regarded as our complete betrayal afterward of everything which might have justified the sacrifice and made the victory worth while. But the subsequent betrayal might have resulted from an initial confusion as to the purposes for which we had taken up the sword. And the more I looked into it the more was I impressed by how much confusion there had been. Applying the light of after-knowledge to the actual causes of the American entry, I saw everywhere what seemed to me to be shortsightedness, ignorance, passionate emotionalism, personal (if often unconscious) greeds or political ambitions, a reckless, almost frivolous, failure to analyze the actual situation at any given time so as to utilize the great power of the United States in such a way as to achieve concrete results in some degree equivalent to the inevitable costs of any given course of action. When it was completed, my book, *Road to War*, was a pretty severe indictment of the whole process; *that* war, I felt, should have been prevented, and I thought I detected in the analysis not a few points at which better controls might have been ap-

plied, not a few ways in which the war mechanism might have been so regulated as either to have avoided the intervention altogether or at least insured that any intervention we might have made would have achieved far more at far less cost.

The book got read. It did seem to influence some people—it may have helped to influence some policies. I never imagined, and would not for a moment claim, that I supplied the inspiration for the neutrality acts of 1935 and later. But *Road to War* appeared at a time when others had begun to re-examine the 1914-1917 period for suggestions as to how in fact to prevent a repetition of that episode. They had detected much the same points as I thought I found for the application of controls that might have "kept the country out of war" then and that might serve to do so in face of the new storms that by this time were gathering in Europe. A good many abler and more influential minds than my own were concerned with the problem; if I speak of my own share in it, it is again only because this is illustrative autobiography. But whatever my share may have been, the results were not entirely satisfactory to myself. The more it came to the point of trying to translate the suggested controls—embargoes, restrictions on loans, discouragements to propaganda and so on—into concrete legislative policy which would meet a future situation that was beyond exact prediction, the more difficult did the undertaking appear. I wrote some articles and made a number of speeches about neutrality and how to maintain it, but it never seemed to me that I succeeded in saying much. In the end a number of the suggestions implicit in my book (as in other studies of the subject) were written into law. But the several neutrality acts were obviously fum-



bling and confused creations; they began to be applied, in the Ethiopian, the Far Eastern and the Spanish crisis, in some very peculiar and unexpected ways, and it seemed as if something, somewhere, must have been left out of the demonstration.

It was. In the end about all that this particular line of attack had yielded were some suggestions as to technical devices that would assist in keeping the country out of war—provided it wanted to stay out of the war. They were, in other words, devices which would not really be of much practical use except in conditions under which they would hardly be necessary. They might do something toward preventing an abandonment of neutrality for trivial, frivolous, purely momentary, reasons; they nowhere reached to the basic problem of war itself. They said nothing about the fundamental reasons for which nations do or do not fight. Granting that I had proved in my book (I did to my own satisfaction, if not to that of others) that the United States had blundered in a blind and confused way into the last war, and in so doing had doomed its intervention to a large measure of futility, I still had not proved that it might not go clear-sightedly into another war, and thereby achieve results, in terms of national or human welfare, that would be commensurate with the cost. For that matter, I had not even proved that it would not have been an even greater disaster had we stayed out of the last war than it was to go into it. If I had suggested something as to possible means for controlling the war process, I had said nothing whatever about the ends to which the controls should be applied. I had said nothing about the actual role of war in human society; neither had most others. The very people who were most vociferous in their

determination that the United States should never under any circumstances enter another European war were the first to assume it as axiomatic that the country would have to fight if invaded. But why the one and not the other? The answer was by no means so obvious as it appeared to be at first sight.

And all the while such questions were growing only more and not less urgent. While we talked and wrote books and adopted resolutions and devised "peace systems," the distant thunders were muttering steadily louder, steadily more insistent. In this brief sketch of our own private "war to end war" I have scarcely mentioned what was going on in the world at the same time—the rise of military Fascism, the slow disintegration of the League of Nations, the world depression, the invasion of Manchuria, the enthronement of Nazism in supreme power over Germany. It might seem as though I were describing a campaign conducted in a vacuum. It might seem so; and unfortunately that, I believe, is exactly what it was. As I said before, we forgot about society to concentrate our attention upon war. It was war in the abstract we thought about—war in general, an entity to be set aside and examined and combated in itself. This was true, whether we thought of it as a disease, a crime, a stupidity or a mechanical process. In each case we were isolating war from the society in which it appears; and I think that the hard-bitten economic determinists among us—the Marxists who regarded it as an inevitable product of the capitalistic system or the radical materialists who ascribed it most rigorously to such alleged social forces as imperialist rivalry, pressures of population and so on—were doing so just as much as the rest of us. However much they may

## *The Faith of an American*

have fallen back on social forces for their explanation, it was still war in the abstract—war as a thing in itself—of which they were thinking. But war is not abstract, nor a thing in itself. It does not simply grow out of society; in a sense, it *is* society. It is certainly the most striking, and the most completely socialized, of all social activities. We were making a double error. We were at the same time both isolating our subject too rigorously from its social context, and generalizing it too loosely, assuming on the one hand that war could be treated as a thing in itself and on the other hand that all wars were the same kind of thing. One phrase has re-echoed now for years through American life: "We must keep the United States out of war." But two obvious questions have rarely been asked: "Who are 'we'?" and "What war?" Had they been asked more often, we might have made more progress.

We did not ask them; but history did. We had been opposing war in the abstract; Herr Hitler, improving enormously upon the initiatives already taken by Mussolini, by the Russians and the rest, abruptly presented it to us in a very concrete form. We had assumed that all reasonable men were one in wishing to eliminate wars from the world. Here were men—I will not say whether they were reasonable or not, but they were men who had raised themselves to absolute power over great nations—who were deliberately cultivating war as the central framework of society. They had made it the operating principle of the state, the primary social institution binding all others together. War was as fundamental to the totalitarian state as the concept of majority rule or legal process was to the democratic type of social organization. Their economy was based on

armament orders; their politics on military discipline; their social aims on imperial conquest; their foreign policy on all the cruel myths—racial superiority, survival of the fittest, population pressure, the necessity to expand and so on—which had been used to rationalize warfare in the past and which we had labored so long to expose.

We had hated the physical suffering and horror of war; it meant nothing to these men. We had hated the febrile emotionalism, the propaganda lies and exaggerations essential to its conduct by the complex modern state. They made the lie a main instrument of government and elevated propaganda to a religious dogma. We had hated the intellectual suppressions of war, its barbarous blindness and narrowness. They clapped an iron censorship on their people. We had hated war's release of the most primitive passions, the sadism and blood lust to which it gave expression. They had used sadism as a motivating force of their society, and while foreign enemies were unavailable as victims they had quite deliberately appointed their Jewish communities to the role. We had hated, or thought we had hated, war's complete overriding of the individual, its imposition of an absolute unity. They perceived in this aspect of war one of its deepest and most powerful appeals to the lonely human spirit; and while they jammed their concentration camps with the recalcitrant they put all the rest of their people, down to their girls and babies, into uniform. And out of these elements they compounded a social organization of amazing strength, stability and destructive energy.

Here was war in a concrete form which we had not anticipated. Before this development all our arguments fell to the

ground. War is horrible? "Of course," they replied in effect, "what of it?" and they burned all the books, barred all the motion picture films and jammed all the radio broadcasts which might have conveyed this degenerate notion to their own people. Your whole picture of the world is a cruel and grotesque lie? "Naturally," they responded, "so is yours; but ours is a bigger lie and so more readily believed. We will make it bigger still. We will make it such a thundering lie that we shall believe it ourselves and then nothing can touch us." And the trouble was that they were, in a measure, right. Their system worked. It worked to ends that seemed brutal, retrogressive, destructive to us, but it worked; and nothing that we could say—nothing that we had said in the twenty-odd years we had been pondering these problems—had the slightest relevance to the issue.

Here there was not only war in a new form; here was rapidly developing a specific war. We saw it coming nearer and nearer, in China and Ethiopia and Spain and Austria; and nothing in the armory which we had elaborated against war in general had any effect upon the steady advance of this particular conflict. The final demonstration was slow to arrive. The democratic statesmen used all the weapons against war which we had suggested. They were patient; they were reasonable; they refused to take bellicose action; they were slow to build up their own armaments; they tried to see the other side's point of view; they offered concessions. And still the crisis developed. At last there was Munich. Mr. Chamberlain, in effect, took our advice. He was not going to waste human life for small, uncertain and ignoble ends. What, in any rational system of human accounting, was

the fate of Czechoslovakia worth to the young Englishmen who would have to die to save her? What had war ever achieved except disaster and destruction for all? Who could win a modern war, about which the only certain thing was that everyone would be a loser? Mr. Chamberlain applied these principles, which so many of us had so often elaborated, to the case in hand. Mr. Chamberlain did not fight; he did not waste life—and within some eighteen months Europe was filled with the dead bodies of Poles and Finns and Norwegians and Frenchmen and Englishmen and Germans by the hundreds of thousands; the giant bombs were smashing English pubs and churches and homes, the wreck and waste of war was spread over a continent.

Here was the demonstration; and it was convincing. We were no longer facing war in general; here was war, specific and concrete, and it was war offering no quarter, admitting of no compromise. The only way to combat it was to fight it in the literal sense, with its own weapons—bombs, machine-guns, tanks, and a passionate determination however engendered, whether by patriotism, by propaganda, by hope of a better world, by fear of a worse one, or by the simple resolve to do one's share in a common job the doing of which cannot be avoided. Here was the demonstration, and here was the dilemma. One had either to fight war by making oneself warlike—by embracing all the cruelties, the suppressions, the agonies which we had detested—or one had to surrender to it and see it enthroned in the world as the central institution of Western civilization and the world itself organized, directed and controlled by the barbarous men who had built the New Europe around it.

## *The Faith of an American*

Here was the dilemma; and at the first moment it seemed an appalling one. To many it still seems so. It has terrified some, paralyzed others and driven many more into a weak evasion of the issue which is perhaps worse than paralysis. Those who say that we shall never fight in Europe but will of course defend our national territory against invasion are among them. They merely hope that there will never be an invasion; and hiding their eyes in this hope, which is none too solid at best, they refuse to see that once the possibility of fighting at all is admitted, the question of the point at which to fight becomes almost a technical one—a practical question of achieving maximum gain at minimum cost. Those are also among them who talk of piling our own armaments to the skies while making peace with whoever wins in Europe. They are evading the whole issue as Mr. Chamberlain did when he came back from Munich with "peace in our time" and a redoubled rearmament program. Why armaments if we are to make peace, and why peace if we need armaments? What are the armaments supposed to be for? What are they to defend—a mere geographical entity, or a way of life, a general system of political and social ideas, which any peace with a victorious Hitler would certainly make impossible?

There have been many in these past few months who, in all sorts of ways, have been desperately trying to evade their whole problem or hide it from themselves. They do not want to fight and they do not want to surrender; they are very anxious to prepare, but they do not know what the preparedness is to defend, and they shudder when practically effective steps are proposed—such as the prompt occupation of bases, an embargo against Japan,

an alliance with Canada, the despatch of ships or American air squadrons to Britain—which hold out some hope of making the preparedness really effective at minimum long-run cost. But some of us, who after all have lived with this thing a good while now, have begun to ask ourselves some of these rather fundamental questions. Why, for example, should one be denounced as a blood-thirsty warmonger for suggesting that a few thousand Americans should be enlisted now to tip the scales of history where they are hanging balanced on the coasts of England; and yet everybody assume it to be axiomatic that, should the scales go down, we would draft not only New Yorkers but Georgians and Californians to die in far greater numbers for the defense of New York? Why should there be such a determined insistence on the volunteer system of raising an army when no one has ever suggested a volunteer system for raising taxes? Why should we think it admirable to persuade, entice or browbeat our more impressionable young men into dying for us, when if anyone is to be asked to die it can surely only be because this is an imperative duty which each owes equally to the whole?

And in asking such questions as these—I throw them out at random—not only does the dilemma cease to be a dilemma at all, but at last, I think, we begin to approach the heart of this problem with which we have wrestled for twenty-odd years. War loses none of its hideousness or horror. But it is seen clearly to be something which reaches to the very fundamentals of our state and our society. You cannot ask poor men to suffer and die for nothing more than the rich man's profits; you cannot enlist one man to suffer and leave his neighbor free to enjoy in comfort

all the benefits of his sacrifice. You cannot adopt a cautious foreign policy in order to save the lives of a few thousand today if by doing so you are going to slaughter hundreds of thousands tomorrow; similarly, you cannot draft millions to exhaust their time and energy in preparation for defense if you are going to give away everything that you have taught them to believe in defending. War challenges virtually every other institution of society—the justice and equity of its economy, the adequacy of its political systems, the energy of its productive plant, the bases, wisdom and purposes of its foreign policy. There is no aspect of our existence as individuals living in and by virtue of a social group which is not touched, modified, perhaps completely altered by the imperatives of war. And that is only to say, as I have said before, that war *is* society. It is society in action, for defense or aggression. Whether we like it or not it is, at the present stage of human history, virtually our one completely social activity; and so long as it exists in the world we cannot, as social beings, escape it.

We had thought of war as something distinct from the normal operations of society—a special case of disease or crime or stupidity. But while I believe it to partake of all those attributes, it is not special or distinct. It is, as yet, the deepest expression of our social life, and as social beings we have to face it. The young man, for example, who resents being drafted for a year's military service because it will interfere with his career can with justice, I think, be asked why he assumes that he will have a career, if he is uninterested in the common defense of the social framework which alone makes any modern career a possibility. War is society; and there are still times when any social organiza-

tion—as the French have just demonstrated with terrible completeness—must be willing to fight unless it is to die. I do not think this will always be so. The war to end war must and will go on and ultimately I believe it will be victorious. But war cannot be conquered by those who are afraid of it; and no great social ends can ever be achieved by those who are unable to act as members of their own society, utilizing when it is unavoidable the forms of expression, however gross or cruel, through which a social group does in fact operate as a society and not merely as a random collection of individuals.

This may seem illogical; I do not care if it does. For if our first error was to approach war as a thing in itself, our second was to approach it as a purely rational issue. We demanded of this horror that it must have a reason to justify it, quite forgetting that almost no aspect of human life ever is reasonable. If governments are to lead their peoples into war, we said, they must do so in the highest wisdom, in complete purity of motive and for ends not only clearly conceived but worth the sacrifice; and when greed or cowardice or littleness appeared here and there behind the lines we flamed with disgust and disillusion. The disgust was appropriate; the disillusion was naïve. Greed and littleness and unwisdom are the commonplaces of all existence; no triumph of peace has ever been achieved without their presence, and while the effort to reduce them should be unrelenting, their existence should neither cause surprise nor be an excuse for defeatism.

The suffering, we said, must have a reason, and were exasperated when we could find none to assign to it. We forgot the amount of quite irrational suffering in all existence. There are disasters, losses, bit-

ter bereavements in peacetime life—completely aimless, unjust and no less difficult to bear than those imposed by war. The suffering of war is a great reason for trying to do away with war; but we will never do away with war by expecting it to be rational, and to say that it is not is no excuse for failing to fight it with its own weapons, the only weapons, as we have been taught, which give any promise of success.

We are not rationalists discussing a problem in logic. We are men and women living social lives, utilizing for ends that seem good to us, the instruments which society has developed. There is perfection nowhere, either in means or results, and there is suffering everywhere. But we know that no social life of any sort is possible unless it is informed by convictions—convictions which can never in the end be justified rationally but convictions at least so strong that we are prepared, when there is no alternative, to fight and take the risk of dying for them. And we must be prepared to do this, not as a result of a bargain—I will risk my neck in an airplane if you guarantee that my children will live in peace, security, enlightenment and on a good income—but simply because we are partners in a common, social effort, and the thing has to be done if we are to do anything. I suggested before that perhaps the best of all reasons for enlisting is that everybody else is doing it; the reason that when there is a common job to be done we wish to have our part in its doing.

The American way of life has many faults and blemishes; it also has many things about it that one may hold up as worth fighting for and risking death for—its freedoms, its decencies, its strivings toward a better existence for greater numbers of its people, its effort to utilize as

the springs of its social and political system the highest rather than the basest, the most advanced rather than the most primitive, instinctual drives in humanity. But great as these things are, and imminent though the present threat to them may be, I still do not think we can offer them as the sole, or even the primary, reason for again taking up the sword or again being prepared to do so. If our attitude is purely defensive, if we are merely sitting hoarding our liberties against threatened attack, those liberties are only too likely to atrophy anyway. If we try to make a bargain out of it, if we say to our countrymen, "you must be ready to fight in order to preserve your freedom, in order to enjoy this or that benefit of a democratic as opposed to a totalitarian system, in order to safeguard the nation against invasion," we may always find that the reasons do not particularly appeal. Men's values inevitably differ, and in the last analysis are always irrational, beyond assessment by any form of cost accounting in which such-and-such an amount of pain or death can be equated to such-and-such a quantity of human or social advance. It is not, really, that kind of calculation at all. But suppose we say: "You must be ready to fight; if you are that; if the society of which you are a part has that much cohesion, conviction and energy as a social whole, then perhaps you will have a chance to make good your freedoms, to avoid the crimes of totalitarian retrogression, really to preserve your nation and whatever of its values seem best to you from foreign invasion—and to do all these things probably with far less cost in life and suffering than if you confess your social organization to be a weak and spineless thing, a mere collection of individual

## *Credos for Today*

selfishnesses." Suppose we say that. I think we are much closer to the facts both of war and of social organization as a whole; I think we are much nearer to putting our hands upon the primary levers that operate the world we live in. We are then moving with, and not in puny revolt against, the main stream of human existence. We are not then merely kicking against the machinery which drives it; we are not, with the totalitarians, developing all the crudest, most primitive and most wasteful elements of that machinery in order easily to establish a barren power; but we are utilizing the basic mechanisms to produce, in time, better machinery, better results, a better ultimate life.

We are doing our part. I have a feeling that it is worth doing for itself, and in that feeling the dilemma seems to me to disappear. If war can only be fought by making war upon it, then I am prepared to make war upon it. And I doubt whether any other great social end can be achieved unless one is ready at least to risk one's life, as a unit in the social mechanism, for its attainment. I have put all this in gener-

alized, one might say philosophical terms. It seems to me no less true if it is translated into the most rigidly practical ones. Given the existing world situation as of today, I do not know, I am sure, whether the United States can avoid war, death, destruction; whether it can maintain the essentials of liberal-democratic institutions; a reasonably free, full and prosperous life for its people or not. But it seems to me, as a purely practical calculation in politico-diplomatic probabilities, that the United States will have a far better chance of doing all these things, of utilizing its power to achieve maximum gains at minimum costs, if it can now rely upon a people who feel themselves one, who are ready to do any jobs that require doing, who are prepared in the last analysis to fight if need be and die if they must, who do not shudder in humanitarian horror over a small sacrifice of life if it offers any real and practical chance of averting much greater sacrifices, who have first of all the energy to act as a people, and after that the resolve to utilize the action toward great and not little ends.

## POLITICAL GREATNESS

*by* PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

Nor happiness, nor majesty, nor fame,  
Nor peace, nor strength, nor skill in arms or arts,  
Shepherd those herds whom tyranny makes tame;  
Verse echoes not one beating of their hearts,  
History is but the shadow of their shame,  
Art veils her glass, or from the pageant starts  
As to oblivion their blind millions fleet,  
Staining that Heaven with obscure imagery  
Of their own likeness. What are numbers knit  
By force or custom? Man who man would be,  
Must rule the empire of himself; in it

## *The Secret Sharer*

Must be supreme, establishing his throne  
On vanquished will, quelling the anarchy  
Of hopes and fears, being himself alone.

### THE SECRET SHARER

by JOSEPH CONRAD

ON MY RIGHT HAND there were lines of fishing-stakes resembling a mysterious system of half-submerged bamboo fences, incomprehensible in its division of the domain of tropical fishes, and crazy of aspect as if abandoned forever by some nomad tribe of fishermen now gone to the other end of the ocean; for there was no sign of human habitation as far as the eye could reach. To the left a group of barren islets, suggesting ruins of stone walls, towers, and blockhouses, had its foundations set in a blue sea that itself looked solid, so still and stable did it lie below my feet; even the track of light from the westering sun shone smoothly, without that animated glitter which tells of an imperceptible ripple. And when I turned my head to take a parting glance at the tug which had just left us anchored outside the bar, I saw the straight line of the flat shore joined to the stable sea, edge to edge, with a perfect and unmarked closeness, in one leveled floor half brown, half blue under the enormous dome of the sky. Corresponding in their insignificance to the islets of the sea, two small clumps of trees, one on each side of the only fault in the impeccable joint, marked the mouth of the river Meinam we had just left on the first preparatory stage of our homeward journey; and, far back on the inland level, a larger and loftier mass, the grove

surrounding the great Paknam pagoda, was the only thing on which the eye could rest from the vain task of exploring the monotonous sweep of the horizon. Here and there gleams as of a few scattered pieces of silver marked the windings of the great river; and on the nearest of them, just within the bar, the tug steaming right into the land became lost to my sight, hull and funnel and masts, as though the impassive earth had swallowed her up without an effort, without a tremor. My eye followed the light cloud of her smoke, now here, now there, above the plain, according to the devious curves of the stream, but always fainter and farther away, till I lost it at last behind the miter-shaped hill of the great pagoda. And then I was left alone with my ship, anchored at the head of the Gulf of Siam.

She floated at the starting-point of a long journey, very still in an immense stillness, the shadows of her spars flung far to the eastward by the setting sun. At that moment I was alone on her decks. There was not a sound in her—and around us nothing moved, nothing lived, not a canoe on the water, not a bird in the air, not a cloud in the sky. In this breathless pause at the threshold of a long passage we seemed to be measuring our fitness for a long and arduous enterprise, the appointed task of both our existences to be carried

From: *'Twixt Land and Sea*, by Joseph Conrad, copyright 1912 by Doubleday and Company, Inc.



## *Credos for Today*

out, far from all human eyes, with only sky and sea for spectators and for judges.

There must have been some glare in the air to interfere with one's sight, because it was only just before the sun left us that my roaming eyes made out beyond the highest ridge of the principal islet of the group something which did away with the solemnity of perfect solitude. The tide of darkness flowed on swiftly; and with tropical suddenness a swarm of stars came out above the shadowy earth, while I lingered yet, my hand resting lightly on my ship's rail as if on the shoulder of a trusted friend. But, with all that multitude of celestial bodies staring down at one, the comfort of quiet communion with her was gone for good. And there were also disturbing sounds by this time—voices, footsteps forward; the steward flitted along the main-deck, a busily ministering spirit; a hand-bell tinkled urgently under the poop-deck. . . .

I found my two officers waiting for me near the supper table, in the lighted cuddy. We sat down at once, and as I helped the chief mate, I said:

"Are you aware that there is a ship anchored inside the islands? I saw her masts above the ridge as the sun went down."

He raised sharply his simple face, overcharged by a terrible growth of whisker, and emitted his usual ejaculations: "Bless my soul, sir! You don't say so!"

My second mate was a round-cheeked, silent young man, grave beyond his years, I thought; but as our eyes happened to meet I detected a slight quiver on his lips. I looked down at once. It was not my part to encourage sneering on board my ship. It must be said, too, that I knew very little of my officers. In consequence of certain events of no particular significance,

except to myself, I had been appointed to the command only a fortnight before. Neither did I know much of the hands forward. All these people had been together for eighteen months or so, and my position was that of the only stranger on board. I mention this because it has some bearing on what is to follow. But what I felt most was my being a stranger to the ship; and if all the truth must be told, I was somewhat of a stranger to myself. The youngest man on board (barring the second mate), and untried as yet by a position of the fullest responsibility, I was willing to take the adequacy of the others for granted. They had simply to be equal to their tasks; but I wondered how far I should turn out faithful to that ideal conception of one's own personality every man sets up for himself secretly.

Meantime the chief mate, with an almost visible effect of collaboration on the part of his round eyes and frightful whiskers, was trying to evolve a theory of the anchored ship. His dominant trait was to take all things into earnest consideration. He was of a painstaking turn of mind. As he used to say, he "liked to account to himself" for practically everything that came in his way, down to a miserable scorpion he had found in his cabin a week before. The why and the wherefore of that scorpion—how it got on board and came to select his room rather than the pantry (which was a dark place and more what a scorpion would be partial to), and how on earth it managed to drown itself in the inkwell of his writing-desk—had exercised him infinitely. The ship within the islands was much more easily accounted for; and just as we were about to rise from table he made his pronouncement.

## The Secret Sharer

She was, he doubted not, a ship from home lately arrived. Probably she drew too much water to cross the bar except at the top of spring tides. Therefore she went into that natural harbor to wait for a few days in preference to remaining in an open roadstead.

"That's so," confirmed the second mate, suddenly, in his slightly hoarse voice. "She draws over twenty feet. She's the Liverpool ship *Sephora* with a cargo of coal. Hundred and twenty-three days from Cardiff."

We looked at him in surprise.

"The tugboat skipper told me when he came on board for your letters, sir," explained the young man. "He expects to take her up the river the day after tomorrow."

After thus overwhelming us with the extent of his information he slipped out of the cabin. The mate observed regretfully that he "could not account for that young fellow's whims." What prevented him telling us all about it at once, he wanted to know.

I detained him as he was making a move. For the last two days the crew had had plenty of hard work, and the night before they had very little sleep. I felt painfully that I—a stranger—was doing something unusual when I directed him to let all hands turn in without setting an anchor-watch. I proposed to keep on deck myself till one o'clock or thereabouts. I would get the second mate to relieve me at that hour.

"He will turn out the cook and the steward at four," I concluded, "and then give you a call. Of course at the slightest sign of any sort of wind we'll have the hands up and make a start at once."

He concealed his astonishment. "Very well, sir." Outside the cuddy he put his

head in the second mate's door to inform him of my unheard-of caprice to take a five hours' anchor-watch on myself. I heard the other raise his voice incredulously—"What? The Captain himself?" Then a few more murmurs, a door closed, then another. A few moments later I went on deck.

My strangeness, which had made me sleepless, had prompted that unconventional arrangement, as if I had expected in those solitary hours of the night to get on terms with the ship of which I knew nothing, manned by men of whom I knew very little more. Fast alongside a wharf, littered like any ship in port with a tangle of unrelated things, invaded by unrelated shore people, I had hardly seen her yet properly. Now, as she lay cleared for sea, the stretch of her main-deck seemed to me very fine under the stars. Very fine, very roomy for her size, and very inviting. I descended the poop and paced the waist, my mind picturing to myself the coming passage through the Malay Archipelago, down the Indian Ocean, and up the Atlantic. All its phases were familiar enough to me, every characteristic, all the alternatives which were likely to face me on the high seas—everything! . . . except the novel responsibility of command. But I took heart from the reasonable thought that the ship was like other ships, the men like other men, and that the sea was not likely to keep any special surprises expressly for my discomfiture.

Arrived at that comforting conclusion, I bethought myself of a cigar and went below to get it. All was still down there. Everybody at the after end of the ship was sleeping profoundly. I came out again on the quarter-deck, agreeably at ease in my sleeping-suit on that warm breathless night, barefooted, a glowing cigar in my

teeth, and, going forward, I was met by the profound silence of the fore end of the ship. Only as I passed the door of the fore-castle I heard a deep, quiet, trustful sigh of some sleeper inside. And suddenly I rejoiced in the great security of the sea as compared with the unrest of the land, in my choice of that untempted life presenting no disquieting problems, invested with an elementary moral beauty by the absolute straightforwardness of its appeal and by the singleness of its purpose.

The riding-light in the fore-rigging burned with a clear, untroubled, as if symbolic, flame, confident and bright in the mysterious shades of the night. Passing on my way aft along the other side of the ship, I observed that the rope side-ladder, put over, no doubt, for the master of the tug when he came to fetch away our letters, had not been hauled in as it should have been. I became annoyed at this, for exactitude in small matters is the very soul of discipline. Then I reflected that I had myself peremptorily dismissed my officers from duty, and by my own act had prevented the anchor-watch being formally set and things properly attended to. I asked myself whether it was wise ever to interfere with the established routine of duties even from the kindest of motives. My action might have made me appear eccentric. Goodness only knew how that absurdly whiskered mate would "account" for my conduct, and what the whole ship thought of that informality of their new captain. I was vexed with myself.

Not from compunction certainly, but, as it were mechanically, I proceeded to get the ladder in myself. Now a side-ladder of that sort is a light affair and comes in easily, yet my vigorous tug, which should have brought it flying on board, merely recoiled upon my body in a totally un-

expected jerk. What the devil! . . . I was so astounded by the immovableness of that ladder that I remained stock-still, trying to account for it to myself like that imbecile mate of mine. In the end, of course, I put my head over the rail.

The side of the ship made an opaque belt of shadow on the darkling glassy shimmer of the sea. But I saw at once something elongated and pale floating very close to the ladder. Before I could form a guess a faint flash of phosphorescent light, which seemed to issue suddenly from the naked body of a man, flickered in the sleeping water with the elusive, silent play of summer lightning in a night sky. With a gasp I saw revealed to my stare a pair of feet, the long legs, a broad livid back immersed right up to the neck in a greenish cadaverous glow. One hand, awash, clutched the bottom rung of the ladder. He was complete but for the head. A headless corpse! The cigar dropped out of my gaping mouth with a tiny plop and a short hiss quite audible in the absolute stillness of all things under heaven. At that I suppose he raised up his face, a dimly pale oval in the shadow of the ship's side. But even then I could only barely make out down there the shape of his black-haired head. However, it was enough for the horrid, frost-bound sensation which had gripped me about the chest to pass off. The moment of vain exclamations was past, too. I only climbed on the spare spar and leaned over the rail as far as I could, to bring my eyes nearer to that mystery floating alongside.

As he hung by the ladder, like a resting swimmer, the sea-lightning played about his limbs at every stir; and he appeared in it ghastly, silvery, fish-like. He remained as mute as a fish, too. He made no motion to get out of the water, either.

## *The Secret Sharer*

It was inconceivable that he should not attempt to come on board, and strangely troubling to suspect that perhaps he did not want to. And my first words were prompted by just that troubled incertitude.

"What's the matter?" I asked in my ordinary tone, speaking down to the face upturned exactly under mine.

"Cramp," it answered, no louder. Then slightly anxious, "I say, no need to call anyone."

"I was not going to," I said.

"Are you alone on deck?"

"Yes."

I had somehow the impression that he was on the point of letting go the ladder to swim away beyond my ken—mysterious as he came. But, for the moment, this being appearing as if he had risen from the bottom of the sea (it was certainly the nearest land to the ship) wanted only to know the time. I told him. And he, down there, tentatively:

"I suppose your captain's turned in?"

"I am sure he isn't," I said.

He seemed to struggle with himself, for I heard something like the low, bitter murmur of doubt. "What's the good?" His next words came out with a hesitating effort.

"Look here, my man. Could you call him out quietly?"

I thought the time had come to declare myself.

"I am the captain."

I heard a "By Jove!" whispered at the level of the water. The phosphorescence flashed in the swirl of the water all about his limbs, his other hand seized the ladder.

"My name's Leggatt."

The voice was calm and resolute. A good voice. The self-possession of that man had somehow induced a correspond-

ing state in myself. It was very quietly that I remarked:

"You must be a good swimmer."

"Yes. I've been in the water practically since nine o'clock. The question for me now is whether I am to let go this ladder and go on swimming till I sink from exhaustion, or—to come on board here."

I felt this was no mere formula of desperate speech, but a real alternative in the view of a strong soul. I should have gathered from this that he was young; indeed, it is only the young who are ever confronted by such clear issues. But at the time it was pure intuition on my part. A mysterious communication was established already between us two—in the face of that silent, darkened tropical sea. I was young, too; young enough to make no comment. The mah in the water began suddenly to climb up the ladder, and I hastened away from the rail to fetch some clothes.

Before entering the cabin I stood still, listening in the lobby at the foot of the stairs. A faint snore came through the closed door of the chief mate's room. The second mate's door was on the hook, but the darkness in there was absolutely soundless. He, too, was young and could sleep like a stone. Remained the steward, but he was not likely to wake up before he was called. I got a sleeping-suit out of my room and, coming back on deck, saw the naked man from the sea sitting on the main-hatch, glimmering white in the darkness, his elbows on his knees and his head in his hands. In a moment he had concealed his damp body in a sleeping-suit of the same gray-stripe pattern as the one I was wearing and followed me like my double on the poop. Together we moved right aft, barefooted, silent.

"What is it?" I asked in a deadened

voice, taking the lighted lamp out of the binnacle, and raising it to his face.

"An ugly business."

He had rather regular features; a good mouth; light eyes under somewhat heavy, dark eyebrows; a smooth, square forehead; no growth on his cheeks; a small, brown mustache, and a well-shaped, round chin. His expression was concentrated, meditative, under the inspecting light of the lamp I held up to his face; such as a man thinking hard in solitude might wear. My sleeping-suit was just right for his size. A well-knit young fellow of twenty-five at most. He caught his lower lip with the edge of white, even teeth.

"Yes," I said, replacing the lamp in the binnacle. The warm, heavy tropical night closed upon his head again.

"There's a ship over there," he murmured.

"Yes, I know. The *Sephora*. Did you know of us?"

"Hadn't the slightest idea. I am the mate of her—" He paused and corrected himself. "I should say I *was*."

"Aha! Something wrong?"

"Yes. Very wrong indeed. I've killed a man."

"What do you mean? Just now?"

"No, on the passage. Weeks ago. Thirty-nine south. When I say a man—"

"Fit of temper," I suggested, confidently.

The shadowy, dark head, like mine, seemed to nod imperceptibly above the ghostly gray of my sleeping-suit. It was, in the night, as though I had been faced by my own reflection in the depths of a somber and immense mirror.

"A pretty thing to have to own up to for a Conway boy," murmured my double, distinctly.

"You're a Conway boy?"

"I am," he said, as if startled. Then, slowly . . . "Perhaps you too—"

It was so; but being a couple of years older I had left before he joined. After a quick interchange of dates a silence fell; and I thought suddenly of my absurd mate with his terrific whiskers and the "Bless my soul—you don't say so" type of intellect. My double gave me an inkling of his thoughts by saying: "My father's a parson in Norfolk. Do you see me before a judge and jury on that charge? For myself I can't see the necessity. There are fellows that an angel from heaven— And I am not that. He was one of those creatures that are just simmering all the time with a silly sort of wickedness. Miserable devils that have no business to live at all. He wouldn't do his duty and wouldn't let anybody else do theirs. But what's the good of talking! You know well enough the sort of ill-conditioned snarling cur—"

He appealed to me as if our experiences had been as identical as our clothes. And I knew well enough the pestiferous danger of such a character where there are no means of legal repression. And I knew well enough also that my double there was no homicidal ruffian. I did not think of asking him for details, and he told me the story roughly in brusque, disconnected sentences. I needed no more. I saw it all going on as though I were myself inside that other sleeping-suit.

"It happened while we were setting a reefed foresail, at dusk. Reefed foresail! You understand the sort of weather. The only sail we had left to keep the ship running; so you may guess what it had been like for days. Anxious sort of job, that. He gave me some of his cursed insolence at the sheet. I tell you I was overdone with this terrific weather that seemed to have no end to it. Terrific, I tell you—

## *The Secret Sharer*

and a deep ship. I believe the fellow himself was half crazed with funk. It was no time for gentlemanly reproof, so I turned round and felled him like an ox. He up and at me. We closed just as an awful sea made for the ship. All hands saw it coming and took to the rigging, but I had him by the throat, and went on shaking him like a rat, the men above us yelling, 'Look out! look out!' Then a crash as if the sky had fallen on my head. They say that for over ten minutes hardly anything was to be seen of the ship—just the three masts and a bit of the fore-castle head and of the poop all awash driving along in a smother of foam. It was a miracle that they found us, jammed together behind the forebitts. It's clear that I meant business, because I was holding him by the throat still when they picked us up. He was black in the face. It was too much for them. It seems they rushed us aft together, gripped as we were, screaming 'Murder!' like a lot of lunatics, and broke into the cuddy. And the ship running for her life, touch and go all the time, any minute her last in a sea fit to turn your hair gray only a-looking at it. I understand that the skipper, too, started raving like the rest of them. The man had been deprived of sleep for more than a week, and to have this sprung on him at the height of a furious gale nearly drove him out of his mind. I wonder they didn't fling me overboard after getting the carcass of their precious ship-mate out of my fingers. They had rather a job to separate us, I've been told. A sufficiently fierce story to make an old judge and a respectable jury sit up a bit. The first thing I heard when I came to myself was the maddening howling of that endless gale, and on that the voice of the old man. He was hanging

on to my bunk, staring into my face out of his sou'wester.

"Mr. Leggatt, you have killed a man. You can act no longer as chief mate of this ship."

His care to subdue his voice made it sound monotonous. He rested a hand on the end of the skylight to steady himself with, and all that time did not stir a limb, so far as I could see. "Nice little tale for a quiet tea-party," he concluded in the same tone.

One of my hands, too, rested on the end of the skylight; neither did I stir a limb, so far as I knew. We stood less than a foot from each other. It occurred to me that if old "Bless my soul—you don't say so" were to put his head up the companion and catch sight of us, he would think he was seeing double, or imagine himself come upon a scene of weird witchcraft; the strange captain having a quiet confabulation by the wheel with his own gray ghost. I became very much concerned to prevent anything of the sort. I heard the other's soothing undertone.

"My father's a parson in Norfolk," it said. Evidently he had forgotten he had told me this important fact before. Truly a nice little tale.

"You had better slip down into my stateroom now," I said, moving off stealthily. My double followed my movements; our bare feet made no sound; I let him in, closed the door with care, and, after giving a call to the second mate, returned on deck for my relief.

"Not much sign of any wind yet," I remarked when he approached.

"No, sir. Not much," he assented, sleepily, in his hoarse voice, with just enough deference, no more, and barely suppressing a yawn.

"Well, that's all you have to look out for. You have got your orders."

"Yes, sir."

I paced a turn or two on the poop and saw him take up his position face forward with his elbow in the ratlines of the mizzen-rigging before I went below. The mate's faint snoring was still going on peacefully. The cuddy lamp was burning over the table on which stood a vase with flowers, a polite attention from the ship's provision merchant—the last flowers we should see for the next three months at the very least. Two bunches of bananas hung from the beam symmetrically, one on each side of the rudder-casing. Everything was as before in the ship—except that two of her captain's sleeping-suits were simultaneously in use, one motionless in the cuddy, the other keeping very still in the captain's stateroom.

It must be explained here that my cabin had the form of the capital letter L, the door being within the angle and opening into the short part of the letter. A couch was to the left, the bed-place to the right; my writing-desk and the chronometers' table faced the door. But anyone opening it, unless he stepped right inside, had no view of what I call the long (or vertical) part of the letter. It contained some lockers surmounted by a bookcase; and a few clothes, a thick jacket or two, caps, oilskin coat, and such like, hung on books. There was at the bottom of that part a door opening into my bath-room, which could be entered also directly from the saloon. But that way was never used.

The mysterious arrival had discovered the advantage of this particular shape. Entering my room, lighted strongly by a big bulkhead lamp swung on gimbals above my writing-desk, I did not see him

anywhere till he stepped out quietly from behind the coats hung in the recessed part.

"I heard somebody moving about, and went in there at once," he whispered.

I, too, spoke under my breath.

"Nobody is likely to come in here without knocking and getting permission."

He nodded. His face was thin and the sunburn faded, as though he had been ill. And no wonder. He had been, I heard presently, kept under arrest in his cabin for nearly seven weeks. But there was nothing sickly in his eyes or in his expression. He was not a bit like me, really; yet, as we stood leaning over my bed-place, whispering side by side, with our dark heads together and our backs to the door, anybody bold enough to open it stealthily would have been treated to the uncanny sight of a double captain busy talking in whispers with his other self.

"But all this doesn't tell me how you came to hang on to our side-ladder," I inquired, in the hardly audible murmurs we used, after he had told me something more of the proceedings on board the *Sephora* once the bad weather was over.

"When we sighted Java Head I had had time to think all those matters out several times over. I had six weeks of doing nothing else, and with only an hour or so every evening for a tramp on the quarter-deck."

He whispered, his arms folded on the side of my bed-place, staring through the open port. And I could imagine perfectly the manner of this thinking out—a stubborn if not a steadfast operation; something of which I should have been perfectly incapable.

"I reckoned it would be dark before we closed with the land," he continued, so low that I had to strain my hearing, near as we were to each other, shoulder

## *The Secret Sharer*

touching shoulder almost. "So I asked to speak to the old man. He always seemed very sick when he came to see me—as if he could not look me in the face. You know, that foresail saved the ship. She was too deep to have run long under bare poles. And it was I that managed to set it for him. Anyway, he came. When I had him in my cabin—he stood by the door looking at me as if I had the halter round my neck already—I asked him right away to leave my cabin door unlocked at night while the ship was going through Sunda Straits. There would be the Java coast within two or three miles, off Angier Point. I wanted nothing more. I've had a prize for swimming my second year in the Conway."

"I can believe it," I breathed out.

"God only knows why they locked me in every night. To see some of their faces you'd have thought they were afraid I'd go about at night strangling people. Am I a murdering brute? Do I look it? By Jove! if I had been he wouldn't have trusted himself like that into my room. You'll say I might have chucked him aside and bolted out, there and then—it was dark already. Well, no. And for the same reason I wouldn't think of trying to smash the door. There would have been a rush to stop me at the noise, and I did not mean to get into a confounded scrimmage. Somebody else might have got killed—for I would not have broken out only to get chucked back, and I did not want any more of that work. He refused, looking more sick than ever. He was afraid of the men, and also of that old second mate of his who had been sailing with him for years—a gray-headed old humbug; and his steward, too, had been with him devil knows how long—seventeen years or more—a dogmatic sort of loafer who hated me

like poison, just because I was the chief mate. No chief mate ever made more than one voyage in the *Sephora*, you know. Those two old chaps ran the ship. Devil only knows what the skipper wasn't afraid of (all his nerve went to pieces altogether in that hellish spell of bad weather we had)—of what the law would do to him—of his wife, perhaps. Oh, yes! she's on board. Though I don't think she would have meddled. She would have been only too glad to have me out of the ship in any way. The 'brand of Cain' business, don't you see. That's all right. I was ready enough to go off wandering on the face of the earth—and that was price enough to pay for an Abel of that sort. Anyhow, he wouldn't listen to me. 'This thing must take its course. I represent the law here.' He was shaking like a leaf. 'So you won't?' 'No!' 'Then I hope you will be able to sleep on that,' I said, and turned my back on him. 'I wonder that *you* can,' cries he, and locks the door.

"Well, after that, I couldn't. Not very well. That was three weeks ago. We have had a slow passage through the Java Sea; drifted about Carimata for ten days. When we anchored here they thought, I suppose, it was all right. The nearest land (and that's five miles) is the ship's destination; the consul would soon set about catching me; and there would have been no object in bolting to these islets there. I don't suppose there's a drop of water on them. I don't know how it was, but tonight that steward, after bringing me my supper, went out to let me eat it, and left the door unlocked. And I ate it—all there was, too. After I had finished I strolled out on the quarter-deck. I don't know that I meant to do anything. A breath of fresh air was all I wanted, I believe. Then a sudden temptation came over me. I kicked off my



slippers and was in the water before I had made up my mind fairly. Somebody heard the splash and they raised an awful hullabaloo. 'He's gone! Lower the boats! He's committed suicide! No, he's swimming.' Certainly I was swimming. It's not so easy for a swimmer like me to commit suicide by drowning. I landed on the nearest islet before the boat left the ship's side. I heard them pulling about in the dark, hailing, and so on, but after a bit they gave up. Everything quieted down and the anchorage became as still as death. I sat down on a stone and began to think. I felt certain they would start searching for me at daylight. There was no place to hide on those stony things—and if there had been, what would have been the good? But now I was clear of that ship, I was not going back. So after a while I took off all my clothes, tied them up in a bundle with a stone inside, and dropped them in the deep water on the outer side of that islet. That was suicide enough for me. Let them think what they liked, but I didn't mean to drown myself. I meant to swim till I sank—but that's not the same thing. I struck out for another of these little islands, and it was from that one that I first saw your riding-light. Something to swim for. I went on easily, and on the way I came upon a flat rock a foot or two above water. In the daytime, I dare say, you might make it out with a glass from your poop. I scrambled up on it and rested myself for a bit. Then I made another start. That last spell must have been over a mile."

His whisper was getting fainter and fainter, and all the time he stared straight out through the port-hole, in which there was not even a star to be seen. I had not interrupted him. There was something that made comment impossible in his nar-

rative, or perhaps in himself; a sort of feeling, a quality, which I can't find a name for. And when he ceased, all I found was a futile whisper: "So you swam for our light?"

"Yes—straight for it. It was something to swim for. I couldn't see any stars low down because the coast was in the way, and I couldn't see the land, either. The water was like glass. One might have been swimming in a confounded thousand-feet-deep cistern with no place for scrambling out anywhere; but what I didn't like was the notion of swimming round and round like a crazed bullock before I gave out; and as I didn't mean to go back . . . No. Do you see me being hauled back, stark naked, off one of these little islands by the scruff of the neck and fighting like a wild beast? Somebody would have got killed for certain, and I did not want any of that. So I went on. Then your ladder—"

"Why didn't you hail the ship?" I asked, a little louder.

He touched my shoulder lightly. Lazy footsteps came right over our heads and stopped. The second mate had crossed from the other side of the poop and might have been hanging over the rail, for all we knew.

"He couldn't hear us talking—could he?" My double breathed into my very ear, anxiously.

His anxiety was an answer, a sufficient answer, to the question I had put to him. An answer containing all the difficulty of that situation. I closed the port-hole quietly, to make sure. A louder word might have been overheard.

"Who's that?" he whispered then.

"My second mate. But I don't know much more of the fellow than you do."

And I told him a little about myself. I had been appointed to take charge while

## The Secret Sharer

I least expected anything of the sort, not quite a fortnight ago. I didn't know either the ship or the people. Hadn't had the time in port to look about me or size anybody up. And as to the crew, all they knew was that I was appointed to take the ship home. For the rest, I was almost as much of a stranger on board as himself, I said. And at the moment I felt it most acutely. I felt that it would take very little to make me a suspect person in the eyes of the ship's company.

He had turned about meantime; and we, the two strangers in the ship, faced each other in identical attitudes.

"Your ladder—" he murmured, after a silence. "Who'd have thought of finding a ladder hanging over at night in a ship anchored out here! I felt just then a very unpleasant faintness. After the life I've been leading for nine weeks, anybody would have got out of condition. I wasn't capable of swimming round as far as your rudder-chains. And, lo and behold; there was a ladder to get hold of. After I gripped it I said to myself, 'What's the good?' When I saw a man's head looking over I thought I would swim away presently and leave him shouting—in whatever language it was. I didn't mind being looked at. I—I liked it. And then you speaking to me so quietly—as if you had expected me—made me hold on a little longer. It had been a confounded lonely time—I don't mean while swimming. I was glad to talk a little to somebody that didn't belong to the *Sephora*. As to asking for the captain, that was a mere impulse. It could have been no use, with all the ship knowing about me and the other people pretty certain to be round here in the morning. I don't know—I wanted to be seen, to talk with somebody, before I went on. I don't know what I would have said.

... "Fine night, isn't it?" or something of the sort."

"Do you think they will be round here presently?" I asked with some incredulity.

"Quite likely," he said, faintly.

He looked extremely haggard all of a sudden. His head rolled on his shoulders.

"H'm. We shall see then. Meantime get into that bed," I whispered. "Want help? There."

It was a rather high bed-place with a set of drawers underneath. This amazing swimmer really needed the lift I gave him by seizing his leg. He tumbled in, rolled over on his back, and flung one arm across his eyes. And then, with his face nearly hidden, he must have looked exactly as I used to look in that bed. I gazed upon my other self for a while before drawing across carefully the two green serge curtains which ran on a brass rod. I thought for a moment of pinning them together for greater safety, but I sat down on the couch, and once there I felt unwilling to rise and hunt for a pin. I would do it in a moment. I was extremely tired, in a peculiarly intimate way, by the strain of stealthiness, by the effort of whispering and the general secrecy of this excitement. It was three o'clock by now and I had been on my feet since nine, but I was not sleepy; I could not have gone to sleep. I sat there, fagged out, looking at the curtains, trying to clear my mind of the confused sensation of being in two places at once, and greatly bothered by an exasperating knocking in my head. It was a relief to discover suddenly, that it was not in my head at all, but on the outside of the door. Before I could collect myself the words "Come in" were out of my mouth, and the steward entered with a tray, bringing in my morning coffee. I had slept, after all, and I was so frightened

## *Credos for Today*

that I shouted, "This way! I am here, steward," as though he had been miles away. He put down the tray on the table next the couch and only then said, very quietly, "I can see you are here, sir." I felt him give me a keen look, but I dared not meet his eyes just then. He must have wondered why I had drawn the curtains of my bed before going to sleep on the couch. He went out, hooking the door open as usual.

I heard the crew washing decks above me. I knew I would have been told at once if there had been any wind. Calm, I thought, and I was doubly vexed. Indeed, I felt dual more than ever. The steward reappeared suddenly in the doorway. I jumped up from the couch so quickly that he gave a start.

"What do you want here?"

"Close your port, sir—they are washing decks."

"It is closed," I said, reddening.

"Very well, sir." But he did not move from the doorway and returned my stare in an extraordinary, equivocal manner for a time. Then his eyes wavered, all his expression changed, and in a voice unusually gentle, almost coaxingly:

"May I come in to take the empty cup away, sir?"

"Of course!" I turned my back on him while he popped in and out. Then I unhooked and closed the door and even pushed the bolt. This sort of thing could not go on very long. The cabin was as hot as an oven, too. I took a peep at my double, and discovered that he had not moved, his arm was still over his eyes; but his chest heaved; his hair was wet; his chin glistened with perspiration. I reached over him and opened the port.

"I must show myself on deck," I reflected.

Of course, theoretically, I could do what I liked, with no one to say nay to me within the whole circle of the horizon; but to lock my cabin door and take the key away I did not dare. Directly I put my head out of the companion I saw the group of my two officers, the second mate barefooted, the chief mate in long india-rubber boots, near the break of the poop, and the steward half-way down the poop-ladder talking to them eagerly. He happened to catch sight of me and dived, the second ran down on the main-deck shouting some order or other, and the chief mate came to meet me, touching his cap.

There was a sort of curiosity in his eye that I did not like. I don't know whether the steward had told them that I was "queer" only, or downright drunk, but I know the man meant to have a good look at me. I watched him coming with a smile which, as he got into point-blank range, took effect and froze his very whiskers. I did not give him time to open his lips.

"Square the yards by lifts and braces before the hands go to breakfast."

It was the first particular order I had given on board that ship; and I stayed on deck to see it executed, too. I had felt the need of asserting myself without loss of time. That sneering young cub got taken down a peg or two on that occasion, and I also seized the opportunity of having a good look at the face of every foremast man as they filed past me to go to the after braces. At breakfast time, eating nothing myself, I presided with such frigid dignity that the two mates were only too glad to escape from the cabin as soon as decency permitted; and all the time the dual working of my mind distracted me almost to the point of insanity. I was constantly watching myself, my secret self, as dependent on my actions as my own per-

## The Secret Sharer

sonality, sleeping in that bed, behind that door which faced me as I sat at the head of the table. It was very much like being mad, only it was worse because one was aware of it.

I had to shake him for a solid minute, but when at last he opened his eyes it was in the full possession of his senses, with an inquiring look.

"All's well so far," I whispered. "Now you must vanish into the bath-room."

He did so, as noiseless as a ghost, and then I rang for the steward, and facing him boldly, directed him to tidy up my stateroom while I was having my bath—"and be quick about it." As my tone admitted of no excuses, he said, "Yes, sir," and ran off to fetch his dust-pan and brushes. I took a bath and did most of my dressing, splashing, and whistling softly for the steward's edification, while the secret sharer of my life stood drawn up bolt upright in that little space, his face looking very sunken in daylight, his eyelids lowered under the stern, dark line of his eyebrows drawn together by a slight frown.

When I left him there to go back to my room the steward was finishing dusting. I sent for the mate and engaged him in some insignificant conversation. It was, as it were, trifling with the terrific character of his whiskers; but my object was to give him an opportunity for a good look at my cabin. And then I could at last shut, with a clear conscience, the door of my stateroom and get my double back into the recessed part. There was nothing else for it. He had to sit still on a small folding stool, half smothered by the heavy coats hanging there. We listened to the steward going into the bath-room out of the saloon, filling the water-bottles there, scrubbing the bath, setting things to rights,

whisk, bang, clatter—out again into the saloon—turn the key—click. Such was my scheme for keeping my second self invisible. Nothing better could be contrived under the circumstances. And there we sat; I at my writing-desk ready to appear busy with some papers, he behind me out of sight of the door. It would not have been prudent to talk in daytime; and I could not have stood the excitement of that queer sense of whispering to myself. Now and then, glancing over my shoulder, I saw him far back there, sitting rigidly on the low stool, his bare feet close together, his arms folded, his head hanging on his breast—and perfectly still. Anybody would have taken him for me.

I was fascinated by it myself. Every moment I had to glance over my shoulder. I was looking at him when a voice outside the door said:

"Beg pardon, sir."

"Well" . . . I kept my eyes on him, and so when the voice outside the door announced, "There's a ship's boat coming our way, sir," I saw him give a start—the first movement he had made for hours. But he did not raise his bowed head.

"All right. Get the ladder over."

I hesitated. Should I whisper something to him? But what? His immobility seemed to have been never disturbed. What could I tell him he did not know already? . . . Finally I went on deck.

## II

The skipper of the *Sephora* had a thin red whisker all round his face, and the sort of complexion that goes with hair of that color; also the particular, rather smeary shade of blue in the eyes. He was not exactly a showy figure; his shoulders were high, his stature but middling—one

leg slightly more bandy than the other. He shook hands, looking vaguely around. A spiritless tenacity was his main characteristic, I judged. I behaved with a politeness which seemed to disconcert him. Perhaps he was shy. He mumbled to me as if he were ashamed of what he was saying; gave his name (it was something like Archbold—but at this distance of years I hardly am sure), his ship's name, and a few other particulars of that sort, in the manner of a criminal making a reluctant and doleful confession. He had had terrible weather on the passage out—terrible—terrible—wife aboard, too.

By this time we were seated in the cabin and the steward brought in a tray with a bottle and glasses. "Thanks! No." Never took liquor. Would have some water, though. He drank two tumblerfuls. Terrible thirsty work. Ever since daylight had been exploring the islands round his ship.

"What was that for—fun?" I asked, with an appearance of polite interest.

"No!" He sighed. "Painful duty."

As he persisted in his mumbling and I wanted my double to hear every word, I hit upon the notion of informing him that I regretted to say I was hard of hearing.

"Such a young man, too!" he nodded, keeping his smeary blue, unintelligent eyes fastened upon me. "What was the cause of it—some disease?" he inquired, without the least sympathy and as if he thought that, if so, I'd got no more than I deserved.

"Yes; disease," I admitted in a cheerful tone which seemed to shock him. But my point was gained, because he had to raise his voice to give me his tale. It is not worth while to record that version. It was just over two months since all this had happened, and he had thought so much

about it that he seemed completely muddled as to its bearings, but still immensely impressed.

"What would you think of such a thing happening on board your own ship? I've had the *Sephora* for these fifteen years. I am a well-known shipmaster."

He was densely distressed—and perhaps I should have sympathized with him if I had been able to detach my mental vision from the unsuspected sharer of my cabin as though he were my second self. There he was on the other side of the bulkhead, four or five feet from us, no more, as we sat in the saloon. I looked politely at Captain Archbold (if that was his name), but it was the other I saw, in a gray sleeping-suit, seated on a low stool, his bare feet close together, his arms folded, and every word said between us falling into the ears of his dark head bowed on his chest.

"I have been at sea now, man and boy, for seven-and-thirty years, and I've never heard of such a thing happening in an English ship. And that it should be my ship. Wife on board, too."

I was hardly listening to him.

"Don't you think," I said, "that the heavy sea which, you told me, came aboard just then might have killed the man? I have seen the sheer weight of a sea kill a man very neatly, by simply breaking his neck."

"Good God!" he uttered, impressively, fixing his smeary blue eyes on me. "The sea! No man killed by the sea ever looked like that." He seemed positively scandalized at my suggestion. And as I gazed at him, certainly not prepared for anything original on his part, he advanced his head close to mine and thrust his tongue out at me so suddenly that I couldn't help starting back.

## The Secret Sharer

After scoring over my calmness in this graphic way he nodded wisely. If I had seen the sight, he assured me, I would never forget it as long as I lived. The weather was too bad to give the corpse a proper sea burial. So next day at dawn they took it up on the poop, covering its face with a bit of bunting; he read a short prayer, and then, just as it was, in its oilskins and long boots, they launched it amongst those mountainous seas that seemed ready every moment to swallow up the ship herself and the terrified lives on board of her.

"That reefed foresail saved you," I threw in.

"Under God—it did," he exclaimed fervently. "It was by a special mercy, I firmly believe, that it stood some of those hurricane squalls."

"It was the setting of that sail which—" I began.

"God's own hand in it," he interrupted me. "Nothing less could have done it. I don't mind telling you that I hardly dared give the order. It seemed impossible that we could touch anything without losing it, and then our last hope would have been gone."

The terror of that gale was on him yet. I let him go on for a bit, then said, casually—as if returning to a minor subject:

"You were very anxious to give up your mate to the shore people, I believe?"

He was. To the law. His obscure tenacity on that point had in it something incomprehensible and a little awful; something, as it were, mystical, quite apart from his anxiety that he should not be suspected of "countenancing any doings of that sort." Seven-and-thirty virtuous years at sea, of which over twenty of immaculate command, and the last fifteen in

the *Sephora*, seemed to have laid him under some pitiless obligation.

"And you know," he went on, groping shamefacedly amongst his feelings, "I did not engage that young fellow. His people had some interest with my owners. I was in a way forced to take him on. He looked very smart, very gentlemanly, and all that. But do you know—I never liked him, somehow. I am a plain man. You see, he wasn't exactly the sort for the chief mate of a ship like the *Sephora*."

I had become so connected in thoughts and impressions with the secret sharer of my cabin that I felt as if I, personally, were being given to understand that I, too, was not the sort that would have done for the chief mate of a ship like the *Sephora*. I had no doubt of it in my mind.

"Not at all the style of man. You understand," he insisted, superfluously, looking hard at me.

I smiled urbanely. He seemed at a loss for a while.

"I suppose I must report a suicide."

"Beg pardon?"

"Sui-cide! That's what I'll have to write to my owners directly I get in."

"Unless you manage to recover him before tomorrow," I assented, dispassionately. . . . "I mean, alive."

He mumbled something which I really did not catch, and I turned my ear to him in a puzzled manner. He fairly bawled:

"The land—I say, the mainland is at least seven miles off my anchorage."

"About that."

My lack of excitement, of curiosity, of surprise, of any sort of pronounced interest, began to arouse his distrust. But except for the felicitous pretense of deafness I had not tried to pretend anything. I had felt utterly incapable of playing the part of ignorance properly, and therefore was

afraid to try. It is also certain that he had brought some ready-made suspicions with him, and that he viewed my politeness as a strange and unnatural phenomenon. And yet how else could I have received him? Not heartily! That was impossible for psychological reasons, which I need not state here. My only object was to keep off his inquiries. Surlily? Yes, but surliness might have provoked a point-blank question. From its novelty to him and from its nature, punctilious courtesy was the manner best calculated to restrain the man. But there was the danger of his breaking through my defense bluntly. I could not, I think, have met him by a direct lie, also for psychological (not moral) reasons. If he had only known how afraid I was of his putting my feeling of identity with the other to the test! But, strangely enough—(I thought of it only afterwards)—I believe that he was not a little disconcerted by the reverse side of that weird situation, by something in me that reminded him of the man he was seeking—suggested a mysterious similitude to the young fellow he had distrusted and disliked from the first.

However that might have been, the silence was not very prolonged. He took another oblique step.

"I reckon I had no more than a two-mile pull to your ship. Not a bit more."

"And quite enough, too, in this awful heat," I said.

Another pause full of mistrust followed. Necessity, they say, is mother of invention, but fear, too, is not barren of ingenious suggestions. And I was afraid he would ask me point-blank for news of my other self.

"Nice little saloon, isn't it?" I remarked, as if noticing for the first time the way his eyes roamed from one closed door to

the other. "And very well fitted out, too. Here, for instance," I continued, reaching over the back of my seat negligently and flinging the door open, "is my bath-room."

He made an eager movement, but hardly gave it a glance. I got up, shut the door of the bath-room, and invited him to have a look round, as if I were very proud of my accommodation. He had to rise and be shown round, but he went through the business without any raptures whatever.

"And now we'll have a look at my state-room," I declared, in a voice as loud as I dared to make it, crossing the cabin to the starboard side with purposely heavy steps.

He followed me in and gazed around. My intelligent double had vanished. I played my part.

"Very convenient—isn't it?"

"Very nice. Very comfy . . ." He didn't finish and went out brusquely as if to escape from some unrighteous wiles of mine. But it was not to be. I had been too frightened not to feel vengeful; I felt I had him on the run, and I meant to keep him on the run. My polite insistence must have had something menacing in it, because he gave in suddenly. And I did not let him off a single item; mate's room, pantry, storerooms, the very sail-locker which was also under the poop—he had to look into them all. When at last I showed him out on the quarter-deck he drew a long, spiritless sigh, and mumbled dismally that he must really be going back to his ship now. I desired my mate, who had joined us, to see to the captain's boat.

The man of whiskers gave a blast on the whistle which he used to wear hanging round his neck, and yelled, "*Sephora's* away!" My double down there in my cabin must have heard, and certainly

could not feel more relieved than I. Four fellows came running out from somewhere forward and went over the side, while my own men, appearing on deck too, lined the rail. I escorted my visitor to the gangway ceremoniously, and nearly overdid it. He was a tenacious beast. On the very ladder he lingered, and in that unique, guiltily conscientious manner of sticking to the point:

"I say . . . you . . . you don't think that—"

I covered his voice loudly:

"Certainly not. . . . I am delighted. Good-by."

I had an idea of what he meant to say, and just saved myself by the privilege of defective hearing. He was too shaken generally to insist, but my mate, close witness of that parting, looked mystified and his face took on a thoughtful cast. As I did not want to appear as if I wished to avoid all communication with my officers, he had the opportunity to address me.

"Seems a very nice man. His boat's crew told our chaps a very extraordinary story, if what I am told by the steward is true. I suppose you had it from the captain, sir?"

"Yes. I had a story from the captain."

"A very horrible affair— isn't it, sir?"

"It is."

"Beats all these tales we hear about murders in Yankee ships."

"I don't think it beats them. I don't think it resembled them in the least."

"Bless my soul—you don't say so! But of course I've no acquaintance whatever with American ships, not I, so I couldn't go against your knowledge. It's horrible enough for me. . . . But the queerest part is that those fellows seemed to have some idea the man was hidden aboard here.

They had really. Did you ever hear of such a thing?"

"Preposterous—isn't it?"

We were walking to and fro athwart the quarter-deck. No one of the crew forward could be seen (the day was Sunday), and the mate pursued:

"There was some little dispute about it. Our chaps took offense. 'As if we would harbor a thing like that,' they said. 'Wouldn't you like to look for him in our coal-hole?' Quite a tiff. But they made it up in the end. I suppose he did drown himself. Don't you, sir?"

"I don't suppose anything."

"You have no doubt in the matter, sir?"

"None whatever."

I left him suddenly. I felt I was producing a bad impression, but with my double down there it was most trying to be on deck. And it was almost as trying to be below. Altogether a nerve-trying situation. But on the whole I felt less torn in two when I was with him. There was no one in the whole ship whom I dared take into my confidence. Since the hands had got to know his story, it would have been impossible to pass him off for anyone else, and an accidental discovery was to be dreaded now more than ever. . . .

The steward being engaged in laying the table for dinner, we could talk only with our eyes when I first went down. Later in the afternoon we had a cautious try at whispering. The Sunday quietness of the ship was against us; the stillness of air and water around her was against us; the elements, the men were against us—everything was against us in our secret partnership; time itself—for this could not go on forever. The very trust in Providence was, I suppose, denied to his guilt. Shall I confess that this thought cast me down very much? And as to the chapter



of accidents which counts for so much in the book of success, I could only hope that it was closed. For what favorable accident could be expected?

"Did you hear everything?" were my first words as soon as we took up our position side by side, leaning over my bed-place.

He had. And the proof of it was his earnest whisper, "The man told you he hardly dared to give the order."

I understood the reference to be to that saving foresail.

"Yes. He was afraid of it being lost in the setting."

"I assure you he never gave the order. He may think he did, but he never gave it. He stood there with me on the break of the poop after the maintopsail blew away, and whimpered about our last hope—positively whimpered about it and nothing else—and the night coming on! To hear one's skipper go on like that in such weather was enough to drive any fellow out of his mind. It worked me up into a sort of desperation. I just took it into my own hands and went away from him, boiling, and— But what's the use telling you? *You* know! . . . Do you think that if I had not been pretty fierce with them I should have got the men to do anything? Not it! The bo's'n perhaps? Perhaps! It wasn't a heavy sea—it was a sea gone mad! I suppose the end of the world will be something like that; and a man may have the heart to see it coming once and be done with it—but to have to face it day after day—I don't blame anybody. I was precious little better than the rest. Only—I was an officer of that old coal-wagon, anyhow—"

"I quite understand," I conveyed that sincere assurance into his ear. He was out of breath with whispering; I could hear him

pant slightly. It was all very simple. The same strung-up force which had given twenty-four men a chance, at least, for their lives, had, in a sort of recoil, crushed an unworthy mutinous existence.

But I had no leisure to weigh the merits of the matter—footsteps in the saloon, a heavy knock. "There's enough wind to get under way with, sir." Here was the call of a new claim upon my thoughts and even upon my feelings.

"Turn the hands up," I cried through the door. "I'll be on deck directly."

I was going out to make the acquaintance of my ship. Before I left the cabin our eyes met—the eyes of the only two strangers on board. I pointed to the recessed part where the little camp-stool awaited him and laid my finger on my lips. He made a gesture—somewhat vague—a little mysterious, accompanied by a faint smile, as if of regret.

This is not the place to enlarge upon the sensations of a man who feels for the first time a ship move under his feet to his own independent word. In my case they were not unalloyed. I was not wholly alone with my command; for there was that stranger in my cabin. Or rather, I was not completely and wholly with her. Part of me was absent. That mental feeling of being in two places at once affected me physically as if the mood of secrecy had penetrated my very soul. Before an hour had elapsed since the ship had begun to move, having occasion to ask the mate (he stood by my side) to take a compass bearing of the Pagoda, I caught myself reaching up to his ear in whispers. I say I caught myself, but enough had escaped to startle the man. I can't describe it otherwise than by saying that he shied. A grave, preoccupied manner, as though he were in possession of some perplexing intelli-

## *The Secret Sharer*

gence, did not leave him henceforth. A little later I moved away from the rail to look at the compass with such a stealthy gait that the helmsman noticed it—and I could not help noticing the unusual roundness of his eyes. These are trifling instances, though it's to no commander's advantage to be suspected of ludicrous eccentricities. But I was also more seriously affected. There are to a seaman certain words, gestures, that should in given conditions come as naturally, as instinctively as the winking of a menaced eye. A certain order should spring onto his lips without thinking; a certain sign should get itself made, so to speak, without reflection. But all unconscious alertness had abandoned me. I had to make an effort of will to recall myself back (from the cabin) to the conditions of the moment. I felt that I was appearing an irresolute commander to those people who were watching me more or less critically.

And, besides, there were the scares. On the second day out, for instance, coming off the deck in the afternoon (I had straw slippers on my bare feet) I stopped at the open pantry door and spoke to the steward. He was doing something there with his back to me. At the sound of my voice he nearly jumped out of his skin, as the saying is, and incidentally broke a cup.

"What on earth's the matter with you?" I asked, astonished.

He was extremely confused. "Beg your pardon, sir. I made sure you were in your cabin."

"You see I wasn't."

"No, sir. I could have sworn I had heard you moving in there not a moment ago. It's most extraordinary . . . very sorry, sir."

I passed on with an inward shudder. I was so identified with my secret double

that I did not even mention the fact in those scanty, fearful whispers we exchanged. I suppose he had made some slight noise of some kind or other. It would have been miraculous if he hadn't at one time or another. And yet, haggard as he appeared, he looked always perfectly self-controlled, more than calm—almost invulnerable. On my suggestion he remained almost entirely in the bath-room, which, upon the whole, was the safest place. There could be really no shadow of an excuse for anyone ever wanting to go in there, once the steward had done with it. It was a very tiny place. Sometimes he reclined on the floor, his legs bent, his head sustained on one elbow. At others I would find him on the camp-stool, sitting in his gray sleeping-suit and with his cropped dark hair like a patient, unmoved convict. At night I would smuggle him into my bed-place, and we would whisper together, with the regular foot-falls of the officer of the watch passing and repassing over our heads. It was an infinitely miserable time. It was lucky that some tins of fine preserves were stowed in a locker in my stateroom; hard bread I could always get hold of; and so he lived on stewed chicken, *pâté de foie gras*, asparagus, cooked oysters, sardines—on all sorts of abominable sham delicacies out of tins. My early morning coffee he always drank; and it was all I dared do for him in that respect.

Every day there was the horrible maneuvering to go through so that my room and then the bath-room should be done in the usual way. I came to hate the sight of the steward, to abhor the voice of that harmless man. I felt that it was he who would bring on the disaster of discovery. It hung like a sword over our heads.

The fourth day out, I think (we were

## *Credos for Today*

then working down the east side of the Gulf of Siam, tack for tack, in light winds and smooth water)—the fourth day, I say, of this miserable juggling with the unavoidable, as we sat at our evening meal, that man, whose slightest movement I dreaded, after putting down the dishes ran up on deck busily. This could not be dangerous. Presently he came down again; and then it appeared that he had remembered a coat of mine which I had thrown over a rail to dry after having been wetted in a shower which had passed over the ship in the afternoon. Sitting stolidly at the head of the table I became terrified at the sight of the garment on his arm. Of course he made for my door. There was no time to lose.

"Steward," I thundered. My nerves were so shaken that I could not govern my voice and conceal my agitation. This was the sort of thing that made my terrifically whiskered mate tap his forehead with his forefinger. I had detected him using that gesture while talking on deck with a confidential air to the carpenter. It was too far to hear a word, but I had no doubt that this pantomime could only refer to the strange new captain.

"Yes, sir," the pale-faced steward turned resignedly to me. It was this maddening course of being shouted at, checked without rhyme or reason, arbitrarily chased out of my cabin, suddenly called into it, sent flying out of his pantry on incomprehensible errands, that accounted for the growing wretchedness of his expression.

"Where are you going with that coat?"

"To your room, sir."

"Is there another shower coming?"

"I'm sure I don't know, sir. Shall I go up again and see, sir?"

"No! never mind."

My object was attained, as of course my

other self in there would have heard everything that passed. During this interlude my two officers never raised their eyes off their respective plates; but the lip of that confounded cub, the second mate, quivered visibly.

I expected the steward to hook my coat on and come out at once. He was very slow about it; but I dominated my nervousness sufficiently not to shout after him. Suddenly I became aware (it could be heard plainly enough) that the fellow for some reason or other was opening the door of the bath-room. It was the end. The place was literally not big enough to swing a cat in. My voice died in my throat and I went stony all over. I expected to hear a yell of surprise and terror, and made a movement, but had not the strength to get on my legs. Everything remained still. Had my second self taken the poor wretch by the throat? I don't know what I could have done next moment if I had not seen the steward come out of my room, close the door, and then stand quietly by the sideboard.

"Saved," I thought. "But, no! Lost! Gone! He was gone!"

I laid my knife and fork down and leaned back in my chair. My head swam. After a while, when sufficiently recovered to speak in a steady voice, I instructed my mate to put the ship round at eight o'clock himself.

"I won't come on deck," I went on. "I think I'll turn in, and unless the wind shifts I don't want to be disturbed before midnight. I feel a bit seedy."

"You did look middling bad a little while ago," the chief mate remarked without showing any great concern.

They both went out, and I stared at the steward clearing the table. There was nothing to be read on that wretched man's

face. But why did he avoid my eyes I asked myself. Then I thought I should like to hear the sound of his voice.

"Steward!"

"Sir!" Startled as usual.

"Where did you hang up that coat?"

"In the bath-room, sir." The usual anxious tone. "It's not quite dry yet, sir."

For some time longer I sat in the cuddy. Had my double vanished as he had come? But of his coming there was an explanation, whereas his disappearance would be inexplicable. . . . I went slowly into my dark room, shut the door, lighted the lamp, and for a time dared not turn round. When at last I did I saw him standing bolt-upright in the narrow recessed part. It would not be true to say I had a shock, but an irresistible doubt of his bodily existence flitted through my mind. Can it be, I asked myself, that he is not visible to other eyes than mine? It was like being haunted. Motionless, with a grave face, he raised his hands slightly at me in a gesture which meant clearly, "Heavens! what a narrow escape!" Narrow indeed. I think I had come creeping quietly as near insanity as any man who has not actually gone over the border. That gesture restrained me, so to speak.

The mate with the terrific whiskers was now putting the ship on the other tack. In the moment of profound silence which follows upon the hands going to their stations I heard on the poop his raised voice: "Hard alee!" and the distant shout of the order repeated on the main-deck. The sails, in that light breeze, made but a faint fluttering noise. It ceased. The ship was coming round slowly; I held my breath in the renewed stillness of expectation; one wouldn't have thought that there was a single living soul on her decks. A sudden brisk shout, "Mainsail haul!" broke the

spell, and in the noisy cries and rush overhead of the men running away with the main-brace we two, down in my cabin, came together in our usual position by the bed-place.

He did not wait for my question. "I heard him fumbling here and just managed to squat myself down in the bath," he whispered to me. "The fellow only opened the door and put his arm in to hang the coat up. All the same—"

"I never thought of that," I whispered back, even more appalled than before at the closeness of the shave, and marveling at that something unyielding in his character which was carrying him through so finely. There was no agitation in his whisper. Whoever was being driven distracted, it was not he. He was sane. And the proof of his sanity was continued when he took up the whispering again.

"It would never do for me to come to life again."

It was something that a ghost might have said. But what he was alluding to was his old captain's reluctant admission of the theory of suicide. It would obviously serve his turn—if I had understood at all the view which seemed to govern the unalterable purpose of his action.

"You must maroon me as soon as ever you can get amongst these islands off the Cambodge shore," he went on.

"Maroon you! We are not living in a boy's adventure tale," I protested. His scornful whispering took me up.

"We aren't indeed! There's nothing of a boy's tale in this. But there's nothing else for it. I want no more. You don't suppose I am afraid of what can be done to me? Prison or gallows or whatever they may please. But you don't see me coming back to explain such things to an old fellow in a wig and twelve respectable

## *Credos for Today*

tradesmen, do you? What can they know whether I am guilty or not—or of *what* I am guilty, either? That's my affair. What does the Bible say? 'Driven off the face of the earth.' Very well. I am off the face of the earth now. As I came at night so I shall go."

"Impossible!" I murmured. "You can't."

"Can't? . . . Not naked like a soul on the Day of Judgment. I shall freeze on to this sleeping-suit. The Last Day is not yet—and . . . you have understood thoroughly. Didn't you?"

I felt suddenly ashamed of myself. I may say truly that I understood—and my hesitation in letting that man swim away from my ship's side had been a mere sham sentiment, a sort of cowardice.

"It can't be done now till next night," I breathed out. "The ship is on the off-shore tack and the wind may fail us."

"As long as I know that you understand," he whispered. "But of course you do. It's a great satisfaction to have got somebody to understand. You seem to have been there on purpose." And in the same whisper, as if we two whenever we talked had to say things to each other which were not fit for the world to hear, he added, "It's very wonderful."

We remained side by side talking in our secret way—but sometimes silent or just exchanging a whispered word or two at long intervals. And as usual he stared through the port. A breath of wind came now and again into our faces. The ship might have been moored in dock, so gently and on an even keel she slipped through the water, that did not murmur even at our passage, shadowy and silent like a phantom sea.

At midnight I went on deck, and to my mate's great surprise put the ship round on the other tack. His terrible whiskers

flitted round me in silent criticism. I certainly should not have done it if it had been only a question of getting out of that sleepy gulf as quickly as possible. I believe he told the second mate, who relieved him, that it was a great want of judgment. The other only yawned. That intolerable cub shuffled about so sleepily and lolled against the rails in such a slack, improper fashion that I came down on him sharply.

"Aren't you properly awake yet?"

"Yes, sir! I am awake."

"Well, then, be good enough to hold yourself as if you were. And keep a lookout. If there's any current we'll be closing with some islands before daylight."

The east side of the gulf is fringed with islands, some solitary, others in groups. On the blue background of the high coast they seem to float on silvery patches of calm water, arid and gray, or dark green and rounded like clumps of evergreen bushes, with the larger ones, a mile or two long, showing the outlines of ridges, ribs of gray rock under the dank mantle of matted leafage. Unknown to trade, to travel, almost to geography, the manner of life they harbor is an unsolved secret. There must be villages—settlements of fishermen at least—on the largest of them, and some communication with the world is probably kept up by native craft. But all that forenoon, as we headed for them, fanned along by the faintest of breezes, I saw no sign of man or canoe in the field of the telescope I kept on pointing at the scattered group.

At noon I gave no orders for a change of course, and the mate's whiskers became much concerned and seemed to be offering themselves unduly to my notice. At last I said:

"I am going to stand right in. Quite in—as far as I can take her."

## *The Secret Sharer*

The stare of extreme surprise imparted an air of ferocity also to his eyes, and he looked truly terrific for a moment.

"We're not doing well in the middle of the gulf," I continued, casually. "I am going to look for the land breezes tonight."

"Bless my soul! Do you mean, sir, in the dark amongst the lot of all them islands and reefs and shoals?"

"Well—if there are any regular land breezes at all on this coast one must get close inshore to find them, mustn't one?"

"Bless my soul!" he exclaimed again under his breath. All that afternoon he wore a dreamy, contemplative appearance which in him was a mark of perplexity. After dinner I went into my stateroom as if I mean to take some rest. There we two bent our dark heads over a half-unrolled chart lying on my bed.

"There," I said. "It's got to be Koh-ring. I've been looking at it ever since sunrise. It has got two hills and a low point. It must be inhabited. And on the coast opposite there is what looks like the mouth of a biggish river—with some town, no doubt, not far up. It's the best chance for you that I can see."

"Anything. Koh-ring let it be."

He looked thoughtfully at the chart as if surveying chances and distances from a lofty height—and following with his eyes his own figure wandering on the blank land of Cochin-China, and then passing off that piece of paper clean out of sight into uncharted regions. And it was as if the ship had two captains to plan her course for her. I had been so worried and restless running up and down that I had not had the patience to dress that day. I had remained in my sleeping-suit, with straw slippers and a soft floppy hat. The closeness of the heat in the gulf had been

most oppressive, and the crew were used to see me wandering in that airy attire.

"She will clear the south point as she heads now," I whispered into his ear. "Goodness only knows when, though, but certainly after dark. I'll edge her in to half a mile, as far as I may be able to judge in the dark—"

"Be careful," he murmured, warningly—and I realized suddenly that all my future, the only future for which I was fit, would perhaps go irretrievably to pieces in any mishap to my first command.

I could not stop a moment longer in the room. I motioned him to get out of sight and made my way on the poop. That unplayful cub had the watch. I walked up and down for a while thinking things out, then beckoned him over.

"Send a couple of hands to open the two quarter-deck ports," I said, mildly.

He actually had the impudence, or else so forgot himself in his wonder at such an incomprehensible order, as to repeat:

"Open the quarter-deck ports! What for, sir?"

"The only reason you need concern yourself about is because I tell you to do so. Have them opened wide and fastened properly."

He reddened and went off, but I believe made some jeering remark to the carpenter as to the sensible practice of ventilating a ship's quarter-deck. I know he popped into the mate's cabin to impart the fact to him because the whiskers came on deck, as it were by chance, and stole glances at me from below—for signs of lunacy or drunkenness, I suppose.

A little before supper, feeling more restless than ever, I rejoined, for a moment, my second self. And to find him sitting so quietly was surprising, like something against nature, inhuman.

I developed my plan in a hurried whisper.

"I shall stand in as close as I dare and then put her round. I will presently find means to smuggle you out of here into the sail-locker, which communicates with the lobby. But there is an opening, a sort of square for hauling the sails out, which gives straight on the quarter-deck and which is never closed in fine weather, so as to give air to the sails. When the ship's way is deadened in stays and all the hands are aft at the main-braces you will have a clear road to slip out and get overboard through the open quarter-deck port. I've had them both fastened up. Use a rope's end to lower yourself into the water so as to avoid a splash—you know. It could be heard and cause some beastly complication."

He kept silent for a while, then whispered, "I understand."

"I won't be there to see you go," I began with an effort. "The rest . . . I only hope I have understood, too."

"You have. From first to last"—and for the first time there seemed to be a faltering, something strained in his whisper. He caught hold of my arm, but the ringing of the supper bell made me start. He didn't, though; he only released his grip.

After supper I didn't come below again till well past eight o'clock. The faint, steady breeze was loaded with dew; and the wet, darkened sails held all there was of propelling power in it. The night, clear and starry, sparkled darkly, and the opaque, lightless patches shifting slowly against the low stars were the drifting islets. On the port bow there was a big one more distant and shadowily imposing by the great space of sky it eclipsed.

On opening the door I had a back view of my very own self looking at a chart.

He had come out of the recess and was standing near the table.

"Quite dark enough," I whispered.

He stepped back and leaned against my bed with a level, quiet glance. I sat on the couch. We had nothing to say to each other. Over our heads the officer of the watch moved here and there. Then I heard him move quickly. I knew what that meant. He was making for the companion; and presently his voice was outside my door.

"We are drawing in pretty fast, sir. Land looks rather close."

"Very well," I answered. "I am coming on deck directly."

I waited till he was gone out of the cuddy, then rose. My double moved too. The time had come to exchange our last whispers, for neither of us was ever to hear each other's natural voice.

"Look here!" I opened a drawer and took out three sovereigns. "Take this anyhow. I've got six and I'd give you the lot, only I must keep a little money to buy some fruit and vegetables for the crew from native boats as we go through Sunda Straits."

He shook his head.

"Take it," I urged him, whispering desperately. "No one can tell what—"

He smiled and slapped meaningly the only pocket of the sleeping-jacket. It was not safe, certainly. But I produced a large old silk handkerchief of mine, and tying the three pieces of gold in a corner, pressed it on him. He was touched, I suppose, because he took it at last and tied it quickly round his waist under the jacket, on his bare skin.

Our eyes met; several seconds elapsed, till, our glances still mingled, I extended my hand and turned the lamp out. Then I passed through the cuddy, leaving the

## *The Secret Sharer*

door of my room wide open. . . . "Steward!"

He was still lingering in the pantry in the greatness of his zeal, giving a rub-up to a plated cruet stand the last thing before going to bed. Being careful not to wake up the mate, whose room was opposite, I spoke in an undertone.

He looked round anxiously. "Sir!"

"Can you get me a little hot water from the galley?"

"I am afraid, sir, the galley fire's been out for some time now."

"Go and see."

He flew up the stairs.

"Now," I whispered, loudly, into the saloon—too loudly, perhaps, but I was afraid I couldn't make a sound. He was by my side in an instant—the double captain slipped past the stairs—through a tiny dark passage . . . a sliding door. We were in the sail-locker, scrambling on our knees over the sails. A sudden thought struck me. I saw myself wandering barefooted, bareheaded, the sun beating on my dark poll. I snatched off my floppy hat and tried hurriedly in the dark to ram it on my other self. He dodged and fended off silently. I wonder what he thought had come to me before he understood and suddenly desisted. Our hands met gropingly, lingered united in a steady, motionless clasp for a second. . . . No word was breathed by either of us when they separated.

I was standing quietly by the pantry door when the steward returned.

"Sorry, sir. Kettle barely warm. Shall I light the spirit-lamp?"

"Never mind."

I came out on deck slowly. It was now a matter of conscience to shave the land as close as possible—for now he must go overboard whenever the ship was put in

stays. Must! There could be no going back for him. After a moment I walked over to leeward and my heart flew into my mouth at the nearness of the land on the bow. Under any other circumstances I would not have held on a minute longer. The second mate had followed me anxiously.

I looked on till I felt I could command my voice.

"She will weather," I said then in a quiet tone.

"Are you going to try that, sir?" he stammered out incredulously.

I took no notice of him and raised my tone just enough to be heard by the helmsman.

"Keep her good full."

"Good full, sir."

The wind fanned my cheek, the sails slept, the world was silent. The strain of watching the dark loom of the land grow bigger and denser was too much for me. I had shut my eyes—because the ship must go closer. She must! The stillness was intolerable. Were we standing still?

When I opened my eyes the second view started my heart with a thump. The black southern hill of Koh-ring seemed to hang right over the ship like a towering fragment of the everlasting night. On that enormous mass of blackness there was not a gleam to be seen, not a sound to be heard. It was gliding irresistibly towards us and yet seemed already within reach of the hand. I saw the vague figures of the watch grouped in the waist, gazing in awed silence.

"Are you going on, sir?" inquired an unsteady voice at my elbow.

I ignored it. I had to go on.

"Keep her full. Don't check her way. That won't do now," I said, warningly.

"I can't see the sails very well," the



## *Credos for Today*

helmsman answered me, in strange, quavering tones.

Was she close enough? Already she was, I won't say in the shadow of the land, but in the very blackness of it, already swallowed up as it were, gone too close to be recalled, gone from me altogether.

"Give the mate a call," I said to the young man who stood at my elbow as still as death. "And turn all hands up."

My tone had a borrowed loudness reverberated from the height of the land. Several voices cried out together: "We are all on deck, sir."

Then stillness again, with the great shadow gliding closer, towering higher, without a light, without a sound. Such a hush had fallen on the ship that she might have been a bark of the dead floating in slowly under the very gate of Erebus.

"My God! Where are we?"

It was the mate moaning at my elbow. He was thunderstruck, and as it were deprived of the moral support of his whisks. He clapped his hands and absolutely cried out, "Lost!"

"Be quiet," I said, sternly.

He lowered his tone, but I saw the shadowy gesture of his despair. "What are we doing here?"

"Looking for the land wind."

He made as if to tear his hair, and addressed me recklessly.

"She will never get out. You have done it, sir. I knew it'd end in something like this. She will never weather, and you are too close now to stay. She'll drift ashore before she's round. O my God!"

I caught his arm as he was raising it to batter his poor devoted head, and shook it violently.

"She's ashore already," he wailed, trying to tear himself away.

"Is she? . . . Keep good full there!"

"Good full, sir," cried the helmsman in a frightened, thin, child-like voice.

I hadn't let go the mate's arm and went on shaking it. "Ready about, do you hear? You go forward"—shake—"and stop there"—shake—"and hold your noise"—shake—"and see these head-sheets properly overhauled"—shake, shake—shake.

And all the time I dared not look towards the land lest my heart should fail me. I released my grip at last and he ran forward as if fleeing for dear life.

I wondered what my double there in the sail-locker thought of this commotion. He was able to hear everything—and perhaps he was able to understand why, on my conscience, it had to be thus close—no less. My first order "Hard alee!" re-echoed ominously under the towering shadow of Koh-ring as if I had shouted in a mountain gorge. And then I watched the land intently. In that smooth water and light wind it was impossible to feel the ship coming-to. No! I could not feel her. And my second self was making now ready to slip out and lower himself overboard. Perhaps he was gone already . . . ?

The great black mass brooding over our very mastheads began to pivot away from the ship's side silently. And now I forgot the secret stranger ready to depart, and remembered only that I was a total stranger to the ship. I did not know her. Would she do it? How was she to be handled?

I swung the mainyard and waited helplessly. She was perhaps stopped, and her very fate hung in the balance, with the black mass of Koh-ring like the gate of the everlasting night towering over her

## *The Secret Sharer*

taffrail. What would she do now? Had she way on her yet? I stepped to the side swiftly, and on the shadowy water I could see nothing except a faint phosphorescent flash revealing the glassy smoothness of the sleeping surface. It was impossible to tell—and I had not learned yet the feel of my ship. Was she moving? What I needed was something easily seen, a piece of paper, which I could throw overboard and watch. I had nothing on me. To run down for it I didn't dare. There was no time. All at once my strained, yearning stare distinguished a white object floating within a yard of the ship's side. White on the black water. A phosphorescent flash passed under it. What was that thing? . . . I recognized my own floppy hat. It must have fallen off his head . . . and he didn't bother. Now I had what I wanted—the saving mark for my eyes. But I hardly thought of my other self, now gone from the ship, to be hidden forever from all friendly faces, to be a fugitive and a vagabond on the earth, with no brand of the curse on his sane forehead to stay a slaying hand . . . too proud to explain.

And I watched the hat—the expression of my sudden pity for his mere flesh. It had been meant to save his homeless head from the dangers of the sun. And now—behold—it was saving the ship, by serving me for a mark to help out the ignorance of my strangeness. Ha! It was drifting forward, warning me just in time that the ship had gathered sternway.

"Shift the helm," I said in a low voice to the seaman standing still like a statue.

The man's eyes glistened wildly in the binnacle light as he jumped round to the other side and spun round the wheel.

I walked to the break of the poop. On the overshadowed deck all hands stood by the forebraces waiting for my order. The stars ahead seemed to be gliding from right to left. And all was so still in the world that I heard the quiet remark, "She's round," passed in a tone of intense relief between two seamen.

"Let go and haul."

The foreyards ran round with a great noise, amidst cheery cries. And now the frightful whiskers made themselves heard giving various orders. Already the ship was drawing ahead. And I was alone with her. Nothing! no one in the world should stand now between us, throwing a shadow on the way of silent knowledge and mute affection, the perfect communion of a seaman with his first command.

Walking to the taffrail, I was in time to make out, on the very edge of a darkness thrown by a towering black mass like the very gateway of Erebus—yes, I was in time to catch an evanescent glimpse of my white hat left behind to mark the spot where the secret sharer of my cabin and of my thoughts, as though he were my second self, had lowered himself into the water to take his punishment: a free man, a proud swimmer striking out for a new destiny.

*from* THE PEOPLE, YES

*by* CARL SANDBURG

57

Lincoln?

He was a mystery in smoke and flags  
saying yes to the smoke, yes to the flags,  
yes to the paradoxes of democracy,  
yes to the hopes of government  
of the people by the people for the people,  
no to debauchery of the public mind,  
no to personal malice nursed and fed,  
yes to the Constitution when a help,  
no to the Constitution when a hindrance,  
yes to man as a struggler amid illusions,  
each man fated to answer for himself:  
Which of the faiths and illusions of mankind  
must I choose for my own sustaining light  
to bring me beyond the present wilderness?

Lincoln? was he a poet?  
and did he write verses?

"I have not willingly planted a thorn  
in any man's bosom."

"I shall do nothing through malice; what  
I deal with is too vast for malice."

Death was in the air.

So was birth.

What was dying few could say.

What was being born none could know.

He took the wheel in a lashing roaring  
hurricane.

And by what compass did he steer the course  
of the ship?

"My policy is to have no policy," he said in  
the early months,

And three years later, "I have been controlled  
by events."

From *The People, Yes* by Carl Sandburg. Copyright, 1936, by Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc.

## *The People, Yes*

He could play with the wayward human mind, saying, at Charleston, Illinois, September 18, 1858, it was no answer to an argument to call a man a liar.

"I assert that you [pointing a finger in the face of a man in the crowd] are here to-day, and you undertake to prove me a liar by showing that you were in Mattoon yesterday.

"I say that you took your hat off your head and you prove me a liar by putting it on your head."

He saw personal liberty across wide horizons.

"Our progress in degeneracy appears to me to be pretty rapid," he wrote Joshua F. Speed, August 24, 1855. "As a nation we began by declaring that 'all men are created equal, except Negroes.' When the Know-Nothings get control, it will read 'all men are created equal except Negroes and foreigners and Catholics.' When it comes to this, I shall prefer emigrating to some country where they make no pretense of loving liberty."

Did he look deep into a crazy pool  
and see the strife and wrangling  
with a clear eye, writing the military  
head of a stormswept area:  
"If both factions, or neither, shall abuse  
you, you will probably be about right. Be-  
ware of being assailed by one and praised  
by the other"?

Lincoln? was he a historian?  
did he know mass chaos?  
did he have an answer for those  
who asked him to organize chaos?

"Actual war coming, blood grows hot, and blood is spilled. Thought is forced from old channels into confusion. Deception breeds and thrives. Confidence dies and universal suspicion reigns.

"Each man feels an impulse to kill his neighbor, lest he be first killed by him. Revenge and retaliation follow. And all this, as before said, may be among honest men only; but this is not all.

"Every foul bird comes abroad and every dirty reptile rises up. These add crime to confusion.

"Strong measures, deemed indispensable, but harsh at best, such men make worse by maladministration. Murders for old grudges, and murders for pelf, proceed under any cloak that will best cover for the occasion. These causes amply account for what has happened in Missouri."

Early in '64 the Committee of the New York Workingman's Democratic Republican Association called on him with assurances and he meditated aloud for them, recalling race and draft riots:

## *Credos for Today*

"The most notable feature of a disturbance in your city last summer was the hanging of some working people by other working people. It should never be so.

"The strongest bond of human sympathy, outside of the family relation, should be one uniting all working people, of all nations and tongues and kindreds.

"Let not him who is houseless pull down the house of another, but let him labor diligently and build one for himself, thus by example assuring that his own shall be safe from violence when built."

Lincoln? did he gather  
the feel of the American dream  
and see its kindred over the earth?

"As labor is the common burden of our race,  
so the effort of some to shift  
their share of the burden  
onto the shoulders of others  
is the great durable curse of the race."

"I hold,  
if the Almighty had ever made a set of men  
that should do all of the eating  
and none of the work,  
he would have made them  
with mouths only, and no hands;  
and if he had ever made another class,  
that he had intended should do all the work  
and none of the eating,  
he would have made them  
without mouths and all hands."

"—the same spirit that says, 'You toil and  
work and earn bread, and I'll eat it.' No  
matter in what shape it comes, whether  
from the mouth of a king who seeks to  
bestride the people of his own nation  
and live by the fruit of their labor, or  
from one race of men as an apology for  
enslaving another race, it is the same  
tyrannical principle."

"As I would not be a *slave*, so I would not  
be a *master*. This expresses my idea of  
democracy. Whatever differs from this,  
to the extent of the difference, is no de-  
mocracy."

## *The People, Yes*

"I never knew a man who wished to be himself a slave. Consider if you know any *good* thing that no man desires for himself."

"The sheep and the wolf  
are not agreed upon a definition  
of the word liberty."

"The whole people of this nation  
will ever do well  
if well done by."

"The plainest print cannot be read  
through a gold eagle."

"How does it feel to be President?" an Illinois friend asked.

"Well, I'm like the man they rode out of town on a rail. He said if it wasn't for the honor of it he would just as soon walk."

Lincoln? he was a dreamer.  
He saw ships at sea,  
he saw himself living and dead  
in dreams that came.

Into a secretary's diary December 23, 1863, went an entry: "The President tonight had a dream. He was in a party of plain people, and, as it became known who he was, they began to comment on his appearance. One of them said: 'He is a very common-looking man.' The President replied: 'The Lord prefers common-looking people. That is the reason he makes so many of them.'"

He spoke one verse for then and now:  
"If we could first know where we are,  
and whither we are tending,  
we could better judge  
what to do, and how to do it."

# I THINK CONTINUALLY OF THOSE WHO WERE TRULY GREAT

*by* STEPHEN SPENDER

I think continually of those who were truly great.  
Who, from the womb, remembered the soul's history  
Through corridors of light where the hours are suns  
Endless and singing. Whose lovely ambition  
Was that their lips, still touched with fire,  
Should tell of the Spirit clothed from head to foot in song.  
And who hoarded from the Spring branches  
The desires falling across their bodies like blossoms.

What is precious is never to forget  
The essential delight of the blood drawn from ageless springs  
Breaking through rocks in worlds before our earth.  
Never to deny its pleasure in the morning simple light  
Nor its grave evening demand for love.  
Never to allow gradually the traffic to smother  
With noise and fog the flowering of the spirit.

Near the snow, near the sun, in the highest fields  
See how these names are fêted by the waving grass  
And by the streamers of white cloud  
And whispers of wind in the listening sky.  
The names of those who in their lives fought for life  
Who wore at their hearts the fire's centre.  
Born of the sun they travelled a short while towards the sun,  
And left the vivid air signed with their honour.

From Stephen Spender, *Poems*. Copyright, 1934, by the Modern Library, Inc. Reprinted by permission of Random House, Inc.

# THE PROMISE OF AMERICA

*by* THOMAS WOLFE

THE DESIRE for fame is rooted in the hearts of men. It is one of the most powerful of all human desires, and perhaps for that very reason, and because it is so deep and secret, it is the desire that men are most unwilling to admit, particularly those who feel most sharply its keen and piercing spur.

From *You Can't Go Home Again*, by Thomas Wolfe. Harper & Brothers. Copyright, 1940, by Maxwell Perkins as Executor.

## *The Promise of America*

The politician, for example, would never have us think that it is love of office, the desire for the notorious elevation of public place, that drives him on. No, the thing that governs him is his pure devotion to the common weal, his selfless and high-minded statesmanship, his love of his fellow man, and his burning idealism to turn out the rascal who usurps the office and betrays the public trust which he himself, as he assures us, would so gloriously and devotedly maintain.

So, too, the soldier. It is never love of glory that inspires him to his profession. It is never love of battle, love of war, love of all the resounding titles and the proud emoluments of the heroic conqueror. Oh, no. It is devotion to duty that makes him a soldier. There is no personal motive in it. He is inspired simply by the selfless ardor of his patriotic abnegation. He regrets that he has but one life to give for his country.

So it goes through every walk of life. The lawyer assures us that he is the defender of the weak, the guardian of the oppressed, the champion of the rights of defrauded widows and beleaguered orphans, the upholder of justice, the unrelenting enemy, at no matter what cost to himself, of all forms of chicanery, fraud, theft, violence, and crime. Even the business man will not admit a selfish motive in his money-getting. On the contrary, he is the developer of the nation's resources. He is the benevolent employer of thousands of working men who would be lost and on the dole without the organizing genius of his great intelligence. He is the defender of the American ideal of rugged individualism, the shining exemplar to youth of what a poor country boy may achieve in this nation through a devotion to the national virtues of thrift, industry, obedience to

duty, and business integrity. He is, he assures us, the backbone of the country, the man who makes the wheels go round, the leading citizen, Public Friend No. 1.

All these people lie, of course. They know they lie, and everyone who hears them also knows they lie. The lie, however, has become a part of the convention of American life. People listen to it patiently, and if they smile at it, the smile is weary, touched with resignation and the indifferent dismissals of fatigue.

Curiously enough, the lie has also invaded the world of creation—the one place where it has no right at all to exist. There was a time when the poet, the painter, the musician, the artist of whatever sort, was not ashamed to confess that the desire for fame was one of the driving forces of his life and labor. But what a transformation from that time to this! Nowadays one will travel far and come back fruitless if he hopes to find an artist who will admit that he is devoted to anything except the service of some ideal—political, social, economic, religious, or esthetic—which is outside himself, and to which his own humble fame-forsaking person is reverently and selflessly consigned.

Striplings of twenty assure us that the desire for fame is naïvely childish, the fruit of an outworn cult of "romantic individualism." From all the falseness and self-deception of this cult these young gentlemen tell us they are free—without troubling to explain, however, by what process of miraculous purgation they achieved their freedom. It took Goethe, the strongest soul of modern times, some three and eighty years to free his mighty spirit of this last infirmity. Milton, old and blind, forsaken, and past fifty, is said to have won free of it by the end of Cromwell's revolution, in whose employment he de-



## *Credos for Today*

stroyed his sight. And yet, can we be sure that even he was ever wholly clear, for what is the tremendous edifice of *Paradise Lost* except a man's final and triumphant suit against eternity?

Poor, blind Milton!

Fame is the spur that the clear spirit doth  
raise

(That last infirmity of Noble mind)

To scorn delights, and live laborious days;  
But the fair Guerdon when we hope to find,  
And think to burst out into sudden blaze,  
Comes the blind Fury with th'abhorred  
shears,

And slits the thin-spun life. But not the  
praise,

Phoebus repli'd, and touch'd my trembling  
ears;

Fame is no plant that grows on mortal soil,  
Nor in the glistering foil

Set off to th'world, nor in broad rumour lies,  
But lives and spreads aloft by those pure eyes,  
And perfit witness of all judging Jove;

As he pronounces lastly on each deed,  
Of so much fame in Heav'n expect thy meed.

Deluded man! Poor vassal of corrupted time! How fair a thing for us to know that we are not such men as he and Goethe were! We live in more stirring times, and our very striplings are secure in their collective selflessness. We have freed ourselves of all degrading vanities, choked off the ravening desire for individual immortality, and now, having risen out of the ashes of our father's earth into the untainted ethers of collective consecration, we are clear at last of all that vexed, corrupted earth—clear of the sweat and blood and sorrow, clear of the grief and joy, clear of the hope and fear and human agony of which our father's flesh and that of every other man alive before us was ever wrought.

And yet, having achieved this glorious

emancipation; having laid all petty dreams aside; having learned to think of life, not in terms of ourselves, but in terms of the whole mass; having learned to think of life, not as it is today, but as it is going to be five hundred years from now, when all the revolutions have been made, and all the blood has been shed, and all the hundreds of millions of vain and selfish little lives, each concerned with its own individual and romantic breath, have been ruthlessly wiped out in order to usher in the collective glory that will be—having become marvelously and, as it were, overnight such paragons of collective selflessness and such scorers of the vanity of personal fame, is it not strange that though we have new phrases, yet their meaning is still the same? Is it not strange that, feeling only an amused and pitying contempt for those who are still naïve enough to long for glory, we should yet lacerate our souls, poison our minds and hearts, and crucify our spirits with bitter and rancorous hatred against those who are fortunate enough to achieve fame?

Or do we err? Are we mistaken in assuming that these words we read so often are really words of hatred, malice, envy, ridicule, and jeering mockery? Are we mistaken in assuming that the whole vocabulary of abuse which is exhausted every week in the journals of our red and pink-complexioned comrades—the sneers against a man's talent, the bitter denials that his work has any substance, sincerity, truth, or reality whatever—is really what it seems to be? No doubt we *are* mistaken. It would be more charitable to believe that these pure spirits of the present day are what they say they are—collective, selfless, consecrated—and that the words they use do not mean what they seem to mean, and do not betray the romantic and de-

## *The Promise of America*

luded passions that seem to animate them, but are really words used coldly, without passion, for the purposes of collective propaganda—in operations completely surgical, whereby the language of the present day, with all its overtones of superstition, prejudice, and false knowledge, is employed clinically, scientifically, simply to further the Idea of the Future State!

No more, no more! Of what avail to crush these vermin beneath our heavy boot? The locusts have no king, and lice will multiply forever. The poet must be born, and live, and sweat, and suffer, and change, and grow, yet somehow maintain the changeless selfhood of his soul's integrity among all the crawling fashions of this world of lice. The poet lives, and dies, and is immortal; but the eternal trifter of all complexions never dies. The eternal trifter comes and goes, sucks blood of living men, is filled and emptied with the surfeit of each changing fashion. He gorges and disgorges, and is never fed. There is no nurture in him, and he draws no nurture from the food he feeds on. There is no heart, no soul, no blood, no living faith in him: the eternal trifter simply swallows and remains.

And we? Made of our father's earth, blood of his blood, bone of his bone, flesh of his flesh—born like our father here to live and strive, here to win through or be defeated—here, like all the other men who went before us, not too nice or dainty for the uses of this earth—here to live, to suffer, and to die—O brothers, like our fathers in their time, we are burning, burning, burning in the night.

Go, seeker, if you will, throughout the land and you will find us burning in the night.

There where the hackles of the Rocky

Mountains blaze in the blank and naked radiance of the moon, go make your resting stool upon the highest peak. Can you not see us now? The continental wall juts sheer and flat, its huge black shadow on the plain, and the plain sweeps out against the East, two thousand miles away. The great snake that you see there is the Mississippi River.

Behold the gem-strung towns and cities of the good, green East, flung like stardust through the field of night. That spreading constellation to the north is called Chicago, and that giant wink that blazes in the moon is the pendant lake that it is built upon. Beyond, close-set and dense as a clenched fist, are all the jeweled cities of the eastern seaboard. There's Boston, ringed with the bracelet of its shining little towns, and all the lights that sparkle on the rocky indentations of New England. Here, southward and a little to the west, and yet still coasted to the sea, is our intensest ray, the splintered firmament of the towered island of Manhattan. Round about her, sown thick as grain, is the glitter of a hundred towns and cities. The long chain of lights there is the necklace of Long Island and the Jersey shore. Southward and inland, by a foot or two, behold the duller glare of Philadelphia. Southward further still, the twin constellations—Baltimore and Washington. Westward, but still within the borders of the good, green East, that night-time glow and smolder of hell-fire is Pittsburgh. Here, St. Louis, hot and humid in the cornfield belly of the land, and bedded on the mid-length coil and fringes of the snake. There at the snake's mouth, southward six hundred miles or so, you see the jeweled crescent of old New Orleans. Here, west and south again, you see the

## *Credos for Today*

gemmy glitter of the cities on the Texas border.

Turn now, seeker, on your resting stool atop the Rocky Mountains, and look another thousand miles or so across moon-blazing fiend-worlds of the Painted Desert and beyond Sierras' ridge. That magic congeries of lights there to the west, ringed like a studded belt around the magic setting of its lovely harbor, is the fabled town of San Francisco. Below it, Los Angeles and all the cities of the California shore. A thousand miles to north and west, the sparkling towns of Oregon and Washington.

Observe the whole of it, survey it as you might survey a field. Make it your garden, seeker, or your backyard patch. Be at ease in it. It's your oyster—yours to open if you will. Don't be frightened, it's not so big now, when your footstool is the Rocky Mountains. Reach out and dip a hatful of cold water from Lake Michigan. Drink it—we've tried it—you'll not find it bad. Take your shoes off and work your toes down in the river oozes of the Mississippi bottom—it's very refreshing on a hot night in the summertime. Help yourself to a bunch of Concord grapes up there in northern New York State—they're getting good now. Or raid that watermelon patch down there in Georgia. Or, if you like, you can try the Rockyfords here at your elbow, in Colorado. Just make yourself at home, refresh yourself, get the feel of things, adjust your sights, and get the scale. It's your pasture now, and it's not so big—only three thousand miles from east to west, only two thousand miles from north to south—but all between, where ten thousand points of light prick out the cities, towns, and villages, there, seeker, you will find us burning in the night.

Here, as you pass through the brutal

sprawl, the twenty miles of rails and rick-ets, of the South Chicago slums—here, in an unpainted shack, is a Negro boy, and, seeker, he is burning in the night. Behind him is a memory of the cotton fields, the flat and mournful pineland barrens of the lost and buried South, and at the fringes of the pine another nigger shack, with mammy and eleven little niggers. Farther still behind, the slave-driver's whip, the slave ship, and, far off, the jungle dirge of Africa. And before him, what? A roped-in ring, a blaze of lights, across from him a white champion; the bell, the opening, and all around the vast sea-roaring of the crowd. Then the lightning feint and stroke, the black panther's paw—the hot, rotating presses, and the rivers of sheeted print! O seeker, where is the slave ship now?

Or there, in the clay-baked piedmont of the South, that lean and tan-faced boy who sprawls there in the creaking chair among admiring cronies before the open doorways of the fire department, and tells them how he pitched the team to shut-out victory today. What visions burn, what dreams possess him, seeker of the night? The packed stands of the stadium, the bleachers sweltering with their unshaded hordes, the faultless velvet of the diamond, unlike the clay-baked outfields down in Georgia. That mounting roar of eighty thousand voices and Gehrig coming up to bat, the boy himself upon the pitching mound, the lean face steady as a hound's; then the nod, the signal, and the wind-up, the rawhide arm that snaps and crackles like a whip, the small white bullet of the blazing ball, its loud report in the oiled pocket of the catcher's mitt, the umpire's thumb jerked upward, the clean strike.

Or there again, in the East-Side Ghetto

of Manhattan, two blocks away from the East River, a block away from the gas-house district and its thuggery, there in the swarming tenement, shut in his sweltering cell, breathing the sun-baked air through opened window at the fire escape, celled there away into a little semblance of privacy and solitude from all the brawling and vociferous life and argument of his family and the seething hive around him, the Jew boy sits and pores upon his book. In shirt-sleeves, bent above his table to meet the hard glare of a naked bulb, he sits with gaunt, starved face converging to his huge beaked nose, the weak eyes squinting painfully through his thick-lens glasses, his greasy hair roached back in oily scrolls above the slanting cage of his painful and constricted brow. And for

what? For what this agony of concentration? For what this hell of effort? For what this intense withdrawal from the poverty and squalor of dirty brick and rusty fire escapes, from the raucous cries and violence and never-ending noise? For what? Because, brother, he is burning in the night. He sees the class, the lecture room, the shining apparatus of gigantic laboratories, the open field of scholarship and pure research, certain knowledge, and the world distinction of an Einstein name.

So, then, to every man his chance—to every man, regardless of his birth, his shining, golden opportunity—to every man the right to live, to work, to be himself, and to become whatever thing his manhood and his vision can combine to make him—this, seeker, is the promise of America.

## CREDO

by THOMAS WOLFE

I HAVE NEVER before made a statement of belief, although I have believed in many things and said that I believed in them. But I have never stated my belief in concrete terms because almost every element of my nature has been opposed to the hard framework, the finality, the formulation.

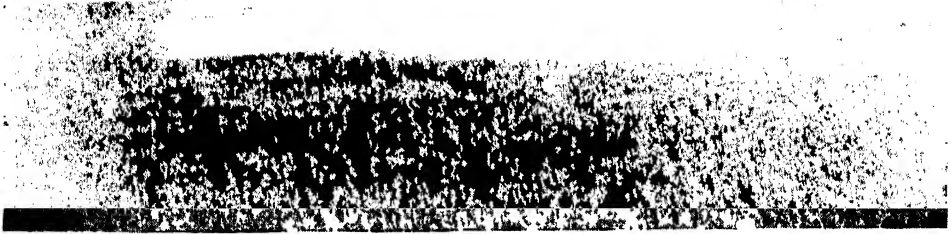
Just as you \* are the rock of life, I am the web; just as you are Time's granite, so, I think, am I Time's plant. My life, more than that of anyone I know, has taken on the form of growth. No man that I have known was ever more deeply rooted in the soil of Time and Memory, the weather of his individual universe, than was I. You followed me through the course of that whole herculean conflict.

For four years, as I lived and worked and explored the jungle depths of Brooklyn—jungle depths coincident with those of my own soul—you were beside me, you followed, and you stuck.

You never had a doubt that I would finish—make an end—round out the cycle—come to the whole of it. The only doubt was mine, enhanced, tormented by my own fatigue and desperation, and by the clacking of the feeble and malicious little tongues which, knowing nothing, whispered that I would never make an end again because I could not begin. We both knew how grotesquely false this was—so false and so grotesque that it was sometimes the subject of an anguished and

From *You Can't Go Home Again*, by Thomas Wolfe. Harper & Brothers. Copyright, 1940, by Maxwell Perkins as Executor.

\* Wolfe's editor.



*Resettlement Administration photograph by Rothstein*

exasperated laugh, The truth was so far different that my own fears were just the opposite: that I might never make an end to anything again because I could never get through telling what I knew, what I felt and thought and *had* to say about it.

That was a giant web in which I was caught, the product of my huge inheritance—the torrential recollectiveness, derived out of my mother's stock, which became a living, million-fibered integument that bound me to the past, not only of my own life, but of the very earth from which I came, so that nothing in the end escaped from its inrooted and all-feeding explorativeness. The way the sunlight came and went upon a certain day, the way grass felt between bare toes, the immediacy of noon, the slamming of an iron gate, the halting skreak upon a corner of a street car, the liquid sound of shoe leather on the pavements as men came home to lunch, the smell of turnip greens, the clang of ice tongs, and the clucking of a hen—and then Time fading like a dream, Time melting to oblivion, when I was two years old. Not only this, but all lost sounds

and voices, forgotten memories exhumed with a constant pulsing of the brain's great ventricle, until I lived them in my dreams, carrying the stupendous and unceasing burden of them through the unresting passages of sleep. Nothing that had ever been was lost. It all came back in an endless flow, even the blisters of the paint upon the mantelpiece in my father's house, the smell of the old leather sofa with my father's print upon it, the smell of dusty bottles and of cobwebs in the cellar, the casual stomping of a slow, gaunt hoof upon the pulpy lumber of a livery stable floor, the proud lift and flourish of a whisking tail, and the oaty droppings. I lived again through all times and weathers I had known—through the fag-ends of wintry desolation in the month of March and the cold, bleak miseries of ragged red at sunset, the magic of young green in April, the blind horror and suffocation of concrete places in mid-summer sun where no limits were, and October with the smell of fallen leaves and wood smoke in the air. The forgotten moments and unnumbered hours came back to me



*Wide World Photos*

with all the enormous cargo of my memory, together with lost voices in the mountains long ago, the voices of the kinsmen dead and never seen, and the houses they had built and died in, and the rutted roads they trod upon, and every unrecorded moment that Aunt Maw had told me of the lost and obscure lives they led long, long ago. So did it all revive in the ceaseless pulsings of the giant ventricle, so did the plant go back, stem by stem, root by root, and filament by filament, until it was complete and whole, compacted of the very earth that had produced it, and of which it was itself the last and living part.

You stayed beside me like the rock you are until I unearthed the plant, followed it back through every fiber of its pattern to its last and tiniest enrootment in the blind, dumb earth. And now that it is finished, and the circle come full swing—

we, too, are finished, and I have a thing to say:

I believe that we are lost here in America, but I believe we shall be found. And this belief, which mounts now to the catharsis of knowledge and conviction, is for me—and I think for all of us—not only our own hope, but America's everlasting, living dream. I think the life which we have fashioned in America, and which has fashioned us—the forms we made, the cells that grew, the honeycomb that was created—was self-destructive in its nature, and must be destroyed. I think these forms are dying, and must die, just as I know that America and the people in it are deathless, undiscovered, and immortal, and must live.

I think the true discovery of America is before us. I think the true fulfillment

## *Credos for Today*

of our spirit, of our people, of our mighty and immortal land, is yet to come. I think the true discovery of our own democracy is still before us. And I think that all these things are certain as the morning, as inevitable as noon. I think I speak for most men living when I say that our America is Here, is Now, and beckons on before us, and that this glorious assurance is not only our living hope, but our dream to be accomplished.

I think the enemy is here before us, too. But I think we know the forms and faces of the enemy, and in the knowledge that we know him, and shall meet him, and eventually must conquer him is also our diving hope. I think the enemy is here before us with a thousand faces, but I think we know that all his faces wear one mask. I think the enemy is single selfishness and compulsive greed, I think the enemy is blind, but has the brutal power of his blind grab. I do not think the enemy was born yesterday, or that he grew to manhood forty years ago, or that he suffered sickness and collapse in 1929, or that we began without the enemy, and that our vision faltered, that we lost the way, and suddenly were in his camp. I think the enemy is old as Time, and evil as Hell, and that he has been here with us from the beginning. I think he stole our earth from us, destroyed our wealth, and ravaged and despoiled our land. I think he took our people and enslaved them, that he polluted the fountains of our life, took unto himself the rarest treasures of our own possession, took our bread and left us with a crust, and, not content, for the nature of the enemy is insatiate—tried finally to take from us the crust.

I think the enemy comes to us with the face of innocence and says to us:

"I am your friend."

I think the enemy deceives us with false words and lying phrases, saying:

"See, I am one of you—I am one of your children, your son, your brother, and your friend. Behold how sleek and fat I have become—and all because I am just one of you, and your friend. Behold how rich and powerful I am—and all because I am one of you—shaped in your way of life, of thinking, of accomplishment. What I am, I am because I am one of you, your humble brother and your friend. Behold," cries Enemy, "the man I am, the man I have become, the thing I have accomplished—and reflect. Will you destroy this thing? I assure you that it is the most precious thing you have. It is yourselves, the projection of each of you, the triumph of your individual lives, the thing that is rooted in your blood, and native to your stock, and inherent in the traditions of America. It is the thing that all of you may hope to be," says Enemy, "for—" humbly—"am I not just one of you? Am I not just your brother and your son? Am I not the living image of what each of you may hope to be, would wish to be, would desire for his own son? Would you destroy this glorious incarnation of your own heroic self? If you do, then," says Enemy, "you destroy yourselves—you kill the thing that is most gloriously American, and in so killing, kill yourselves."

He lies! And now we know he lies! He is not gloriously, or in any other way, ourselves. He is not our friend, our son, our brother. And he is not American! For, although he has a thousand familiar and convenient faces, his own true face is old as Hell.

Look about you and see what he has done.

## WE HOLD THESE TRUTHS\*

by NORMAN CORWIN

**MUSIC.** *A reflective strain behind:*

**A VOICE.** One hundred fifty years is not long in the reckoning of a hill. But to a man it's long enough.

One hundred fifty years is a week-end to a redwood tree, but to a man it's two full lifetimes.

One hundred fifty years is a twinkle to a star, but to a man it's time enough to teach six generations what the meaning is of liberty, how to use it, when to fight for it.

**MUSIC.** *Sweeps up with great energy—nervous, modern, metropolitan. After establishing, it comes down to back the following:*

**A CITIZEN.** Have you ever been to Washington, your capital? Have you been there lately?

Well, let me tell you, it's a place of buildings and of boom and bustle, of the fever of emergency, of workers working overtime, of windows lighted late into the night. It's a handsome city, proud of its sturdy name, proud of the men who've stopped there and made decisions; proud of its domes and lawns and monuments.

**MUSIC.** *Level drops. Traffic background is sneaked in.*

**CITIZEN.** Of course, too, Washington is like some other cities you have seen—has street cars, haberdasheries, newsstands, cof-

fee shops, and slums. At busy intersections there are neon traffic signs, which, when the light's against you, say:

**SIGN** [*very flatly*]. Don't walk.

**CITIZEN.** And when the light changes:

**SIGN.** Walk.

**CITIZEN.** It's a tourist city . . .

*Traffic sounds gradually out.*

**CITIZEN.** . . . which is proper, when you think how much of history a busy guide can cover in a day, and when you realize that the District of Columbia belongs to all the people of the States. The tourists know that here their voices have been heard from clear back home; that here their votes are put to work. The tourists go to see the sights they've seen a thousand pictures of—the sights so famous and familiar that they're thrilled to find they look just as they thought they'd look. Washington Monument, for example, or the Lincoln Memorial—

**MUSIC.** *The city theme is shut out. Now Lincoln music.*

**CITIZEN.**—where the seated and relaxed Abe Lincoln sits between two mighty murals of plain words, his own words:

**LINCOLN** [*on echo mike; slowly, out of stone*]. With firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in . . . to do all which may achieve and cherish a just

From Norman Corwin, *More by Corwin*, Henry Holt and Company, Inc. No performance of this play may be given without the permission of Henry Holt and Company.

\* Written at the invitation of the U. S. Office of Facts and Figures and produced in Hollywood, December 15, 1941, under the direction of the author. The cast included Edward Arnold, Lionel Barrymore, Walter Brennan, Bob Burns, Walter Huston, Marjorie Main, Edward G. Robinson, James Stewart, Rudy Vallee, and Orson Welles. Bernard Herrmann composed the score for the dramatic portion of the program, conducting a symphony orchestra in the studio in Hollywood, while Leopold Stokowski led the New York Philharmonic Orchestra from New York City in the national anthem. President Franklin D. Roosevelt spoke from Washington.

No other single dramatic performance in history ever enjoyed so large an audience. Estimates based on Crossley reports placed the total number of listeners to the original production at more than sixty million.



## Credos for Today

and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.<sup>1</sup>

**MUSIC.** *Lincoln motif segues to city theme.*

**CITIZEN.** The city moves on busily outside the monument. . . . The tourist goes to see the Capitol, the White House, the museums; sees all about him statues and inscriptions—more sayings than he's ever seen before—wise sayings, profound sayings. At the Union Station, for example:

**DEPOT.** A man must carry knowledge with him if he would bring home knowledge.—Samuel Johnson.

**CITIZEN.** The Archives Building:

**ARCHIVES.** What is past is prologue.

**CITIZEN.** The Supreme Court:

**COURT.** Justice, the Guardian of Liberty.

**CITIZEN.** But one of the best is in the Library of Congress.

**LIBRARY.** The noblest motive is the public good.—Virgil.

**MUSIC.** *A respectful chord.*

**CITIZEN.** The tourist thinks that over . . .

**TOURIST.** The noblest motive is the public good.

**CITIZEN.** . . . and with this in mind he climbs the marble stairs inside the Library—to come at length upon a case containing a handwritten document.

**TOURIST** [*reading slowly*]. The engrossed original of the Constitution of the United States of America.

**CITIZEN.** He sees the manuscript is aging, that its words are worn as though from use. The writing's dim; it's hard to make it out . . . it's getting on in years. . . .

**MUSIC.** *Mnemonic strings behind:*

**VOICE** [*distant perspective, symbolic of the faded writing on the manuscript*].

"We the People of the United States, in

Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain, and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

"Article I. Section 1. All legislative Powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States, which

**CITIZEN** [*overlap-*  
*ping*]. The words  
are dim—but not  
the meaning of the  
words. . . .

The pens that put  
this down are dust  
—but not the marks  
they made.

There was a time  
when this was shin-  
ing parchment—  
when the text was  
easier to read—  
when the ink was  
not yet dry.

Suppose that we,  
stopped here in

shall consist of a Senate and House of Representatives.

"Section 2. The House of Representatives shall be composed of Members chosen every second Year by the People of the several States, and the Electors in each State shall have the Qualifications requisite for Electors of the most numerous Branch of the State Legislature.

No Person shall be a Representative who shall not have attained to the Age of twenty-five Years . . . [*Cross on word "Philadelphia" in overlapping narration to:*] both of the United States and of the several States, shall be bound by Oath or Affirmation, to support this Constitution . . .

<sup>1</sup> The numbered notes will be found on page 850.

## We Hold These Truths

modern Wash-  
ton before this  
shrine, were to re-  
turn, go back, go  
back a little north  
by east in time and  
space to one bright  
afternoon in Phila-  
delphia—that fine  
fall day when depu-  
ties from thirteen  
free states sub-  
scribed their names  
to a new blueprint  
of a new society.

WASHINGTON. Now, gentlemen, we are ready for your signatures: by geographical progression, north to south. The deputies from New Hampshire will please sign first.

LANGDON. John Langdon.

GILMAN. Nicholas Gilman.

WASHINGTON. The delegates from Massachusetts.

CITIZEN. Good-looking men, these. Mostly lawyers. Two or three are surgeons.

Broom, there,  
Broom of Dela-

[*Voice fading in rapidly, to represent our return to the scene of the convention*] done in Convention by the Unanimous Consent of the States present the Seventeenth Day of September in the Year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and eighty seven and of the Independence of the United States of America the Twelfth. In witness whereof We have hereunto subscribed our Names, George Washington—President and deputy from Virginia . . .”

GORHAM. Nathaniel Gorham.

KING. Rufus King.

WASHINGTON. The gentlemen from Connecticut, please.

JOHNSON. Wil-

ware, he did surveying for a while.

Sherman, who just signed, he was a shoemaker before he studied law.

That's Washington calling the delegations.

The man behind Ben Franklin is Alexander Hamilton. Ben's getting old now. Eighty-one. Slept off and on throughout the whole convention.

But when it was important to be awake, he was awake—and active.

There have been men assembled in a room before. But never to a greater purpose.

Here come the last to sign, now.

WASHINGTON. The gentlemen from Georgia.

FEW. William Few.

BALDWIN. Abraham Baldwin.

JACKSON. Attest: William Jackson, Secretary.

DELEGATES. [*General and amiable talk; a little laughter. Now that the Constitution has been signed the meeting lightens. This sustains behind:*]

liam Samuel Johnson.

SHERMAN. Roger Sherman.

WASHINGTON. And now our representative of New York.

HAMILTON. Alexander Hamilton.

WASHINGTON. The gentlemen from New Jersey.

LIVINGSTON. William Livingston.

BREARLEY. David Brearley.

WASHINGTON. The gentlemen from North Carolina.

BLOUNT. William Blount.

SPAIGHT. Richard Dobbs Spaight. . .

WASHINGTON. The gentlemen from South Carolina.

RUTLEDGE. J. Rutledge.

PINCKNEY. Charles Cotesworth Pinckney. . .

## Credos for Today

CITIZEN. So—the Constitution has been drafted, signed, and presently will be submitted to the states for their approval. The convention is relaxed now; there are handshakes and felicitations. . . .

Is everybody happy? Will they celebrate, do you suppose? Will Rufus King go home to Boston and be welcomed by a welcoming committee from the city? Will appreciative Virginians hoist James Madison to their shoulders and parade him through the streets, shouting “Father of the Constitution”? Will a thumping band march up and down the town making a noise like this?

CAST. [*Cheering, with:*]

MUSIC. *The thumping of a third-rate band. The effect is cut suddenly.*

CITIZEN. No. There will be no band. [*Pause.*] Will there be speeches?

ORATOR <sup>2</sup> [*fulsomely*]. And I say to you, ladies and gentlemen, the heart of every man and woman—nay, of every CHILD in each and every one of our thirteen States from the granite hills of New Hampshire to the golden sands of GEORGIA, should FILL AND SWELL WITH PRIDE on reading the NOBLE AND GLORIOUS Constitution which our wise and prudent and farsighted representatives in solemn assembly have framed and submitted to our glorious States for their approval. AND I SAY TO YOU . . .

CITIZEN. No. There will be no speeches.<sup>3</sup> There will be no celebration.

No confetti from the windows; fireworks; saluting cannon; roses strewn beneath the coaches of the delegates.

Instead—suspicion.

MUSIC. *A motif of suspicion in and behind:*

CITIZEN. Suspicion from the very men who fought the long fight so that there could be a Constitution drawn for the emancipated States: the farmers and the

clerks; the hackmen and the artisans, the grease-grimed blacksmiths in their shops—these men who only lately put away their guns and powder in a good dry place—these men who won a war of freedom, but who know that freedom must be guarded to be kept. They are suspicious. They are talking on the common, in the tavern, in the parlor, in the foundry room. . . .

MUSIC. *Out, as: Hammering on an anvil is faded in under the foregoing. When the hammering stops:*

SMITH.<sup>4</sup> Mm. What else does it say?

CITIZEN. That covers it. That's the whole thing.

*A few more hammer strokes.*

SMITH [*half to himself, as though testing the word*]. Constitution.

*Three more strokes.*

SMITH. I don't like it.

CITIZEN. Why?

*More strokes. Then the hammer is put down.*

SMITH. C'mere with me. Come over to the door.

*Footsteps on wooden floor; they stop.*

SMITH. See that spire?

CITIZEN. Yes.

SMITH. That's the church I go to.

CITIZEN. What about it?

SMITH. I like it. I'm a God-fearing man. I want to keep on going there.

CITIZEN. Well?

SMITH. I don't want anybody telling me I have to pray *his* way.

CITIZEN. Who'd think of doing that?

SMITH. It's been done. It's happened often.

*Footsteps recrossing slowly to anvil.*

SMITH. Ever hear of state religion?

CITIZEN. Yes.

SMITH [*after a pause*]. It's bad.

*Hammering resumes.*

## *We Hold These Truths*

SMITH. I don't like it. Don't think we should have it.

CITIZEN. We haven't got it.

SMITH. Nothing in that thing you read me guarantees we won't get it!

*Punctuation by the sound of red-hot metal suddenly immersed in water, the effect going right into:*

MUSIC. *Brief transitional passage. It fades for:*

FARMER.<sup>5</sup> You say this here Constitution gives us order and authority, hm?

CITIZEN. Yes.

FARMER. But we had order and authority under King George before the Revolution. Sheeks, the Romans had order and authority under Nero, too—only the wrong kind, and too much of it.

CITIZEN. Yes, but you can surely trust—

FARMER. Trust the men who wrote that Constitution? Sure thing, sure thing. I trust them, neighbor—but they won't always be around.

CITIZEN. Well, you don't seem to understand. This is our own authority. Now if—

FARMER. Fact it's our own don't make no difference. Constitution's fine far as it goes, but the time to talk authority is after you put it down in black and white that we're all free men, and then we'll give you all the authority you need to keep us thataway—and what's more, we'll back it up with guns—that fair enough?

CITIZEN. The way you talk, you'd think—

FARMER. The way I talk, I think it all depends who's handing out authority—whether it's to keep men slaves or keep men free.

MUSIC. *Another transitional passage.*

WIDOW<sup>6</sup> [*angrily*]. Didn't think it was necessary? The English thought it was necessary a hundred years ago! *They've* got a Bill of Rights! Where's ours?

CITIZEN. Maybe they'll get around to that. Maybe they'll amend the Constitution later.

WIDOW. How do we know they will?

CITIZEN. Well, maybe they're planning . . .

WIDOW. I don't like this "maybe" business. When my husband Robert got killed at Trenton there was no maybe about it. He got killed. He knew what he was fighting for, and he was glad to die for it. Now the fighting's over, I want to see it!

MUSIC. *Transitional passage, fading out as: Effect of scraping brick, rapping it with a trowel, etc., is faded in.*

BRICKLAYER<sup>7</sup> [*grousing*]. I dunno, Sam. Sometimes I wonder whether you use your head for anything else than to keep your ears apart.

SAM. I got my opinion and I stick to it. Constitution looks good to me. I don't think it needs no adding to.

BRICKLAYER. Hand me a brick there.

SAM. It's a foundation, that's what it is.

BRICKLAYER. Sure it's a foundation! That's just what I'm talking about. But do you build a foundation and then go away and not build the house? Do you clear the woods and then let the ground go barren?

SAM. Oh, piffle.

BRICKLAYER [*outraged*]. What a way to argue! Piffle? Is that all you can say? Hand me that brick there!

MUSIC. *Again, transition.*

LAWYER. What's the hurry? Give them time. It's not an easy job to get a new country running right.

MERCHANT. That's just the point! It's a lot easier to get it running wrong!

MUSIC. *Transition.*

CLERK [*impatiently*]. Rights, rights, rights, man! Can't you get that through your head? Why shouldn't rights be writ-

## *Credos for Today*

ten into the Constitution just as much as rules on how to meet and when to vote and how much a senator should get paid?

*MUSIC. Culmination of the sequence, holding under:*

**CITIZEN.** Not them alone. Not only little men like them, whose names escape us, whose names will never be recalled . . . the men who left their bloody footprints in the snows of Pennsylvania and buried their comrades in the clearing back of the clump of evergreens: the little men who took it, gave it, stuck for the duration, saw it through. Not they alone are doubters, wondering and grumbling. No; there are big names too—the names now bandied on the tongue, but later to be lustrous, later to be sainted: Tom Jefferson, George Mason, Jimmy Madison, Pat Henry.

Take Jefferson, for instance. Know what he says?

**JEFFERSON.** A Bill of Rights is what the people are entitled to against any government on earth.

**CITIZEN.** Take Patrick Henry.

**HENRY.** I cannot give my oath to support this Constitution without a Bill of Rights.

**CITIZEN.** Take Mason, the wealthy planter of Virginia, who'd rather plant a seed of liberty than twenty thousand acres of tobacco.

**MASON.** A government to be lasting must be founded in the confidence and affections of the people. Without a Bill of Rights this government will end either in monarchy or a tyrannical aristocracy. This Constitution has been formed without the knowledge of the people, and it is not proper to say to them, "Take this or nothing."

**CITIZEN.** Well, then! The Constitution is in peril—this document so handsomely engrossed in Philadelphia. There are

doubts about it, and suspicions. Will the States approve it—approve by ratifying? Will they throw it out, or will they ratify providing certain changes are made?

*MUSIC. Base of a pyramid, with a suggestion of suspense. It holds behind the following and builds progressively:*

**CITIZEN.** The writing's fresh, still fresh upon the parchment. The text is clean, the ink is bold, the meaning clear. Only the worth of the Constitution is uncertain. All the points, the articles, the regulations are well put—but will they be well taken?

The States decide. Not one man, two men, three men, but the States United—they decide.

What says South Carolina?

**SOUTH CAROLINA.** We ratify. But offer four amendments.

*MUSIC. Short statement of new punctuational motif. It progresses with each occurrence under the following:*

**CITIZEN.** What says Massachusetts where she stands?

**MASSACHUSETTS.** We ratify. But offer nine amendments.

**CITIZEN.** New Hampshire, you?

**NEW HAMPSHIRE.** We ratify. But propose twelve amendments.

**CITIZEN.** Rhode Island?

**RHODE ISLAND.** We ratify. But twenty-one amendments, please.

**CITIZEN.** North Carolina?

**NORTH CAROLINA.** Twenty-six amendments, and a Declaration of Men's Rights!

**CITIZEN.** Virginia?

**VIRGINIA.** We ratify, but we're suggesting twenty-nine amendments and a Bill of Rights!

**CITIZEN.** New York?

**NEW YORK.** Thirty-three amendments in full faith and credit<sup>a</sup>—and we ratify!

*MUSIC. Peak of the pyramid; triumphant.*

## *We Hold These Truths*

CITIZEN. Now Congress may begin; may call itself First Congress; may go to work; may tackle the new job of running a democracy.

But it has one thing to remember:

A promise is a promise. The people have been promised changes; promised amendments; promised that their freedoms would be written down in black and white for all to see, for all to know, for all to live and prosper by:

It will take time. No quorum, to begin with. Bad roads. New York City hard to get to. There is some indifference, too. So the days go by; no quorum. Month of March goes by; no quorum. [Pause.]

Well . . . patience. [Pause.] Good things grow slowly. Good things don't come running when you whistle for them. Good things are always fought for; worked for; grown. The acorn to the oak is not an overnight procedure. God Himself took several days to make the earth.

But one day they begin. They sit down in a drafty hall in New York City, and they go to work. At first they're busy with a hundred other things, but Madison keeps after them. He's a stickler for a Bill of Rights. Madison remembers what the people want.

*Hammering, sawing, well off mike. It keeps on at intervals beneath the following:*

CITIZEN. By this time, carpenters are making changes in Federal Hall, adding more room. Place has to be enlarged. Government's growing. The representatives, all fifty-five of them, work through the noise. They are making some additions of their own.

They're working on the Bill of Rights.

MUSIC. *In suddenly, dark, restless (Theme X). It holds under:*

NARRATOR.<sup>9</sup> Do you think fifty-five rep-

resentatives of the American people sat in a hall in New York City, in a drafty hall, and made up articles of freedom? Do you think the Congressmen from thirteen States made up those freedoms out of their own heads? Debated there, deliberated there, without assistance? Themselves? From their own experience?

Oh, no. They had much help.

From many nameless and unknown. From dust in quiet places. From broken bones deep in the earth, deep in forgotten earth, mixed with the empty clay. From bleeding mouths; burnt flesh; cropped ears; from numberless and nameless agonies.

The delegates from dungeons, they were there.

MARTYR [*low, a whisper*]. I said that men were born equal, that is all I said.

NARRATOR. The delegates from ashes at the bottom of the stakes, they were there.

SECOND MARTYR. The king did not approve.

NARRATOR. The gallows delegates, whose corpses lifted gently in the breeze—they too.

VOICES [*whispering in chorus; barely audible*]. We too, we too.

NARRATOR. The exiled wanderers; the Christians killed for being Christians; Jews for being Jews; the Quakers hanged in Boston town—they made a quorum also.

VOICES. Present. We are present.

NARRATOR. The murdered men. The lopped-off hands. The shattered limbs. The red welts where the whiplash bit into the back.

Must you know what they said?

Must you know how they argued?

Must you be told the evidence, the silent testimony of the wraiths? Must it be told verbatim? Listen, then.

MUSIC. *Stops.*

## *Credos for Today*

WOMAN. [*A scream.*]

NARRATOR. That was an argument for an amendment.

MAN. [*A groan.*]

NARRATOR. That was a speech in favor of an article of freedom.

VOICE. [*A shriek.*]

NARRATOR. That prayed the passage of a Bill of Rights.

MUSIC. *Resumes.*

NARRATOR. How much of all this must be told to be believed?

Must it be drawn on diagrams? X marks the spot where decency was last observed? The dotted line shows how the victim staggered? The arrow points to blood?

The headsman, he was there in Federal Hall. The man who turned the ratchets on the rack, he sat in the assembly too.

Nero was there. Caligula, King Philip, Torquemada, Cotton Mather, all the tyrants and the martyrs who had gone before, sat quietly, unseen, among the representatives, read from their memoirs expert testimonies, found their way into the records and between the lines.

All the long and bloody history of fanaticism: murder in the name of God, torture in the name of love, crucifixion in the name of safety to the crown.

CHRIST [*low*]. My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

NARRATOR. He too sat in the Congress . . . the mild man with the scars in his hands and feet where the spikes went through. He was a consultant in the business at hand. Had he not died because the rulers of a realm denied free speech? Was he not nailed up on a cross between two thieves because his preachments were considered treason? He, the son of God, was he not executed over an issue of the Rights of Man?

Make no mistake about it—he was there—he sat beside James Madison and Elbridge Gerry and John Page in Federal Hall. Unseen he was, but voting.

The men of Congress were collaborated with. They added up the gains and losses and the brave words spoken and the brave songs sung; they weighed the drawn and quartered flesh, they took into account the hemlock and the crucifix, the faggot and the garrote.

And then they framed amendments to the Constitution.

MUSIC. *Stops.*

NARRATOR. Out of the agonies, out of the crisscrossed scars of all the human race, they made a bill of rights for their own people—for a new, a willful and a hopeful nation—made a bill of rights to stand against the enemies within: connivers, fakers, those who lust for power, those who make of their authority an insolence.

The Congress of the thirteen States, instructed by the people of the thirteen States, threw up a bulwark, wrote a hope, and made a sign for their posterity against the bigots, the fanatics, bullies, lynchers, race-haters, the cruel men, the spiteful men, the sneaking men, the pessimists, the men who give up fights that have been just begun.

The Congress wrote a ten-part epic of amendments.

MUSIC. *Theme X comes up but does not finish. It brightens, flares, broadens lyrically, and comes down to back the following:*

VOICE [*strong and confident*]. "Amendment One. Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or of the right of the people peace-

## *We Hold These Truths*

ably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances."

LEGISLATOR. Mr. Speaker!

SPEAKER. Mr. Redburn.

LEGISLATOR [*off mike; speaking from the floor of the Virginia Assembly*<sup>10</sup>]. I move this amendment be accepted in its present form, without qualification. It

CITIZEN. These are the voices of Virginians.

They are debating Congress's amendments on this mild December afternoon, this fifteenth of December, 1791—debating in the State Assembly in the Capitol at Richmond. Only one more State is needed now to ratify. Just one more State, and the amendments become law.

The victory is close at hand.

Virginia likes these articles. Virginia, the home of Washington and Jefferson, of Madison and Mason . . . Virginia has fought to win these rights for many years . . . has waited for this day.

Virginia will ratify the Bill of Rights today, and

seems to me that such an article well deserves to rank ahead of any of the other proposed amendments, being at once the most basic and the most comprehensive of all which Congress has seen proper to recommend to the country.

GREY. Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER. Mr. Grey.

GREY. I support the motion of Mr. Redburn, especially in acknowledgment of the fact that this amendment is, in letter and spirit substantially what has already been assured to the citizens of our own commonwealth by the prior enactments of our Assembly. Furthermore, Virginia may take a modest and [*fading*] a reasonable pride in that

Freedom will take hold, take root, begin to burgeon in the rich earth of America.

Today! Today! The fifteenth of December!<sup>11</sup>

so many of her own sons have contributed greatly to the bill before us, also in the fact that its conception and its execution was . . .

MUSIC. *Theme X up to a happy conclusion. This is ratification. This is the long struggle ended.*

CITIZEN. Now! . . . Now the people of the States breathe easier! It's down in black and white—a contract; it's a deal between the future and themselves.

Americans don't make a promise lightly, or take it that way, either. A promise made by honest men to other honest men is like a handclasp and a vow—meant to be understood, meant to be remembered.

Ah, look about the country now. Suspicion thaws like frost beneath the frank diplomacy of spring. The people read the new amendments slowly, pleasurefully, as they'd read a letter from a son just set up in a business who'd written home to tell how he was making good.

*Dinner sounds; crockery, cutlery.*

FARMER<sup>12</sup> [*as though he's discovered something*]. Aha! Aha! Now that's more like it! That's more like it!

WIFE. You've got your sleeve in the soup, dear. [*Pause.*] What's more like what?

FARMER. Listen to this: "Amendment Two. A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed."

WIFE. That mean you can keep your gun?

FARMER. That means if somebody gets into office and turns sour on the people that put him there, why, he can't vex us



## *Credas for Today*

with a standing army the way George did before the war. If we people of the States got arms, nobody's gonna order us to do things the majority of the country ain't voted for. Not without a fight.

WIFE. Better eat that soup 'fore it gets cold. Shouldn't read when you eat, anyways. Put down the paper.

FARMER [*grudgingly*]. Oh, all right. [*He slams down the paper.*]

WIFE [*after quite a pause*]. That's a good law, ain't it, Jasper?

FARMER. Yep.

*Cross-fade dinner sounds to sounds of the anvil as in the previous sequence; we are back in the blacksmith shop. The hammer stops.*

SMITH. Go on. Go on reading. Why'd you stop?

FRIEND.<sup>18</sup> Well, how can you hear me when you're hammering?

SMITH. Concentration. Go on.

FRIEND [*sighs*]. "Amendment Three. No Soldier shall, in time of peace be quartered in any house, without the consent of the Owner, nor in time of war, but in a manner to be prescribed by law."

SMITH. Gives me elbow grease just hearing things like that. Makes the old hammer handle easier.

FRIEND. The way this sounds, you'd think we was expectin' another war. "In a time of war," this says. I thought we just been all through that a little while ago.

SMITH [*laughing*]. Why, the more these amendments make us free, the more they'll be hated by those who don't want freedom because it spoils their game. Think nobody's going to try to break us up because we're united and agreed? Some people are just ornery that way. Wouldn't surprise me none if we had t'fight more wars.

FRIEND. You mean to say we're maybe gonna have to fight all over again to keep

our 'independence? Hope it don't get to be a hâbit.

SMITH. I hope it does! It's a pretty good habit to get into, fighting for your rights. There's always somebody waitin' for a chance to steal valuables—and if freedom ain't a valuable, I don't know what is.

FRIEND [*dryly*]. Yeah. Well.

SMITH. Go on. Read some more.

FRIEND. "Amendment Four. The right of the people to be secure in their persons, homes, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures . . ."

*Hammering resumes.*

FRIEND. ". . . shall not be—" [*Stops momentarily in despair, then shouts to top the hammering.*] "shall not be violated, and no Warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by Oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.

"Amendment Five."

*Hammering begins to fade.*

FRIEND [*begins fading*]. "No person shall be held to answer for a capital, or otherwise infamous crime . . ."

MUSIC. *Sneaks in behind the voice of the widow whom we heard in the sequence of suspicions.*

WIDOW<sup>14</sup> [*in, full*]. I brought you these, Robert.

I grew them myself inside the house.

Don't smell much, but they're awful pretty.

Everything's going on about the same at the house. [*Pause.*] Except I'm a year older since I was here last.

Guess you don't have to worry any more, Robert. Guess you can rest in peace now. Looks like it's going to be all right. They didn't trick you.

Looks all right, Robert.

MUSIC. *Out.*

## *We Hold These Truths*

CITIZEN. The voices of Americans . . . in Maryland, in Pennsylvania, Connecticut, the Carolinas, Georgia . . . up and down the little seaboard nation, the voices of Americans together now, together in a new way, in a strange new way . . . a way that men have never lived together in before . . .

MUSIC. *Sneak in the song "Jefferson and Liberty."*

CITIZEN. . . . proud men, unsuspicious, trusting men, their fighting over and their living just begun, their building and their working and their singing just now getting started. . . .

SINGER.<sup>15</sup> Here strangers from a thousand shores,

Compelled by tyranny to roam,  
Shall find, amid abundant stores,  
A nobler and a happier home.

Rejoice, Columbia's sons, rejoice!

To tyrants never bend the knee  
But join with heart and soul and voice  
For Jefferson and Liberty.

[*Fading behind following speech.*]

Here Art shall lift her laurel'd head,  
Wealth, Industry, and Peace divine,  
And where dark, pathless forests spread,  
Rich fields and lofty cities shine. . . .<sup>16</sup>

MUSIC. *Orchestra takes over the melody and plays lyrically behind:*

CITIZEN. Shall this song make good its promise? Does this folktune hold a truth? Shall strangers from a thousand shores be compelled by tyrannies to roam? Shall they find here amid abundant stores a nobler and a happier home?

One hundred fifty years from this beginning, how much of what is sung and what is written down shall still be good?

This parchment of the Bill of Rights, with the word "Resolved" so plainly written on it, how long will it endure? Is it a passport to a greater day? Will future generations read it, sanction it, and pass it on? Will children's children live by it and work by it and profit by it?

Look it over; look it over; it is new. The parchment shines. The text is easy reading. The words are not yet worn with trial and experience. The writing's fresh, the meaning's clear; the parchment gleams in the December sunlight like a burnished shield upraised against oppression. . . .

JUDICIAL VOICE. "No person shall be held to answer for a capital, or otherwise infamous crime, unless on a presentment or indictment of a Grand Jury, except in cases arising in the land or naval forces, or in the Militia, when in actual service in time of War or public danger; nor shall any person be subject for the same offence to be twice put in jeopardy of life and limb; nor shall he be compelled in any criminal case to be a witness against himself, nor be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor shall private property be taken for public use, with-

CITIZEN. Let's go ahead one hundred fifty years from now. Let's rush headlong, unstop-  
ping, down the corridors of time.

Let's go ahead to 1941.

The writing dims, the parchment cracks and curls up at the edges. [*Pause.*]

And now it's in a

out just compensation. [*Starting to fade as soon as the citizen comes in.*]

"Amendment Six. In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury of the State and district wherein the crime shall have been committed . . ." [*Contin-*

## Credos for Today

case in Washington, D. C. It's in a case behind a pane of special glass protecting it from light. [Change of tone; confidentially.] You see that tourist bending over it? He's trying hard to make the writing out. He's tracing the rights of persons accused of crime. . . .

*ues reading amendments in background, dimly, fading out just after the tourist takes over, below.]*

TOURIST [*simultaneously with the now dim voice of the manuscript itself*]. "Amendment Six. In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury of the State and district wherein the crime shall have been committed, which district shall have been previously ascertained by law, and to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation; to be confronted with the witnesses against him; to have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor, and to have the Assistance of Counsel for his defence."

CITIZEN. Where does this tourist come from? Maybe from a place undreamed of when the Bill of Rights was born—a land as far away from Federal Hall as Europe—California.

What lies tonight between that place and here? Four dozen States without a yard of fenced-in border. A hundred thirty million people . . . people working, people resting up to work some more, people working in a mighty unison to prosecute a war.

Let's move along. Let's move among them, let's hear them living lives and

thinking thoughts and giving off opinions. Let's see now what they have to say, a hundred fifty winters after Richmond. Let's see what happens to a bill of rights through thirty-three administrations, seventy-seven Congresses,<sup>17</sup> and half a dozen wars.

Has anybody anything to say about the status of men's rights, December fifteenth, 1941?

PRISONER.<sup>18</sup> I have something to say, if you don't mind. I'm in jail tonight, but I'm joining in your celebration and cheering as hard as anybody else.

CITIZEN. Er—if you don't mind my asking—

PRISONER. A trumped-up charge. The old routine in this city. But I'm getting out on bail tomorrow, and when I'm finally tried it'll be by a jury and in public, and none of this Gestapo stuff. Not that they wouldn't try it if they could, but that little four-hundred-fifty-word matter you're celebrating tonight stops them short of that.

CITIZEN. What did they chuck you in the clink for? I mean, what charge?

PRISONER. Making a speech for the Fusion Party against the mayor. First we hired a hall, but they took away our permit—said the building was unsafe under an old fire ordinance. So then we went down to Garrison Square, where no permit is required to speak in public, and within ten minutes we were on our way to the police station on charges of blocking traffic, disturbing the peace, and inciting to riot.

CITIZEN. Fine thing.

PRISONER. Yeah, but listen—we'll beat that guy. He's scared of us. He's scared the people will find out the truth—and with good reason—because when they do,

## *We Hold These Truths*

he's finished. That's why he doesn't want us to be heard.

CITIZEN. Uhuh.

PRISONER. It's only the crooks and the frightened little big shots who need to shut up their opponents. That may work all right in some other countries, but not here.

CITIZEN. Well, how are you going to beat him?

PRISONER. There are such things as rights on our side, and not even the mayor's machine is powerful enough to stop us. We'll fight that fight on every front—carry it to the highest courts if necessary—and we'll win!

CITIZEN [*change of tone; to listener*]. Is this the talk of servile men, of tamed and gutless and obedient men? Is this the kind of talk you hear from slaves and witless followers? Not quite. No, not exactly. This is what they meant in Federal Hall and what they voted for one hundred fifty years ago today in Richmond. Those ten amendments are not dusty statutes loafing in retirement. They are a pep talk to the fighters and a fortress to the undefended; they double-bar the front door of the home against the culprit and the searching party; stand the drinks for everybody toasting freedom. Of all things, they are not a set of legal clauses, dry and dusty—(although Amendment Seven makes us wonder):

DRY VOICE. "Amendment Seven. In Suits at common law, where the value in controversy shall exceed twenty dollars, the right of trial shall be preserved, and no fact tried by a jury, shall be otherwise re-examined in any Court of the United States, than according to the rules of the common law."

CITIZEN. Except for that not like a law,

yer's brief at all, but mostly like a kind of free-style ode to liberty, ten verses long.

SECOND VOICE. "Amendment Eight. Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted."

CITIZEN. Treason in most of Europe, a sentiment like that today.

THIRD VOICE. "Amendment Nine. The enumeration in the Constitution, of certain rights, shall not be construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people."

CITIZEN. Notice how many times it says "the people"? Can it be because it *means* the people? . . . Yes, it can.

FOURTH VOICE. "Amendment Ten. The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people."

CITIZEN. Powers reserved to the people in a bill of rights? How the mighty and the proud have fallen! Why, King John, who threw a fit when barons made him sign the Magna Carta—barons, mind you, who were heedless of the common people—John, the tough old monarch, would have died a thousand deaths of apoplexy at the mention of the thought of it! The Pharaohs of old Egypt, masters of the blackest arts of slavery—they would have crawled inside a pyramid and shut one hundred forty-seven secret doors behind them in a panic.

MUSIC. *Theme Y in here. It backs:*

CITIZEN. A promise is a promise.

Has America's been kept? Has it come through peace and war and peace and war untarnished and unbroken?

Has it worked and is it working?

For the people, by the people? Is it going anywhere from here?

Are the rights the right rights? Are they rolling, do they function, do they click?

## *Credos for Today*

Who knows the answer better than the people? Whom better can we ask than the great custodians themselves, the hundred million keepers of the promise?

We shall ask them. Ask a few of them who stand for many more than few—the high and low among them.

MUSIC. *Theme Y out.*

CITIZEN. Ladies and gentlemen, an office clerk.

CLERK. Well—[*clears throat*] we know what freedom is now. Looked for a while there like a lot of us'd forgot what it really meant and how much we had of it, but the news from the four corners of the earth reminded us, all right.

CITIZEN. Ladies and gentlemen, an editor.

EDITOR. There have been attacks on the freedom of the press and strangleholds of various sorts, but they've been broken every time; and today a man is free to start a paper, run it as he pleases, differ from the next man all he wants. That would make it seem to me, for one, that our rights have come down undamaged.

CITIZEN. Ladies and gentlemen, a wor-shiper.

WOMAN. I go to the church of my choice. And sometimes when I don't wish to go, I don't go.

CITIZEN. Ladies and gentlemen, an auto worker.

WORKER. We got the right to organize. We got the right to bargain collectively. Those are good rights, and we're proud of them, and we're better workers on account of them.

CITIZEN. Ladies and gentlemen, a manufacturer.

MANUFACTURER. There is nothing in any law which forbids us to forget class differences and work together to strengthen the sinews of our country.

CITIZEN. Ladies and gentlemen, an Okie.

OKIE. I got a right, ef'n I'm hongry an' out of work, which I is been, to go lookin' for work anywhere in my country. The big court says nobody cain't stop me from lookin'—dang it, that's my right.

CITIZEN. Ladies and gentlemen, a mother.

MOTHER. I might be afraid to bring a child into the world—but not to bring a citizen into the population of this country.

MUSIC. *Theme Y returns and sustains behind:*

CITIZEN. From men beneath the rocking spars of fishing boats in Gloucester, from the vast tenancy of busy cities roaring with the million mingled sounds of work, from towns spread thinly through the Appalachians, from the assembly lines, the forges spitting flame, the night shifts in the mines, the great flat counties of the prairie States, from the grocers and from salesmen and the tugboat pilots and the motor-makers—affirmation! Yes! United proudly in a solemn day! Knit more strongly than we were a hundred fifty years ago!

Can it be progress if our Bill of Rights is stronger now than when it was conceived? Is that not what you'd call wearing well? The incubation of invincibility?

Is not our Bill of Rights more cherished now than ever? The blood more zealous to preserve it whole?

Americans shall answer. For they alone, they know the answer. The people of America: from east, from west, from north, from south.

MUSIC. *Theme Y concludes.*

CITIZEN. Ladies and gentlemen, the President of the people of the United States.

. *The President speaks.*<sup>10</sup>

## *We Hold These Truths*

*Notes:* The experience of writing and producing this was harrowing and valuable. It taught me certain lessons:

(a) Never undertake to write, on short order, a program of historic documentation without assurance of adequate research assistance by trained researchers.

(b) Ten stars are easier to handle than one.

(c) A good score is to a production what a good shortstop is to a baseball team.

(d) Do not die six deaths if your show, when it finally hits the air, keeps falling behind the quality of its dress rehearsal.

(e) Nor a seventh if the telephone in the control room should be ominously silent when your show is over.

(f) Never, never give away controlling rights to anything you have written.

It is with feeling that I expand on each of these points:

(a) The good will of a radio writer is not the best foundation on which to stake an all-out, all-star, all-network program. I had plenty of good will at the time, but small energy, for I had just finished the last of the week-to-week "Twenty-Six" series and felt too exhausted to accept the invitation of the Office of Facts and Figures to do a special job. I declined on grounds that preparing so big a program so soon would send me down to an early grave. But William Bennett Lewis, then radio chief of the OFF, had an answer to that:

"You can go down to an early grave later," he said. "Remember, the chance to celebrate a hundred-and-fiftieth anniversary comes only once in a hundred and fifty years."

"But I'm half dead now."

"Don't you want to die for your country?" he persisted.

"Not that way," I said.

"Listen, anybody can die for the Lux Radio Theater, but nobody in radio has ever been offered a chance to get so much as a stomach ulcer for the Bill of Rights. You're the first."

Mr. Lewis is a persuasive man and I am glad he made me accept, but before the thing was over I had cursed his name every day for twenty-six days. I also cursed myself for not screaming loudly enough in the matter of expert research aid. I needed researchers to help me dig out and piece together the complicated and often fragmentary story of the evolution of the first ten Amendments.

I went down to the Library of Congress to poke solo through a bibliography of the Bill of Rights, and it was tough poking. I had twenty-six days in which to research, write, arrange for and cast this script, and the first twelve went into reading. By ordinary academic standards this is a ridiculously short time to spend on background study. But against the deadline I faced, twelve days was exorbitant.

The staff of the Library was courteous and helpful, but research for radio was then an animal new to the institution, and I had no luck getting the kind of abstracts I needed in a hurry. Everybody was quite properly busy with his own work, Washington being at the time a fairly active community. I had to get special permission to stay late in the untenanted Library—an experience in itself. But after four or five sessions lasting into the cold morning hours, I fell ill of the grippe. Only those who have had to plow through bales of cross-references when suffering from the headaches of grippe can understand how dismal it was. The sheer weight of work-to-be-done-if-you-hope-to-be-ready-with-the-show-on-time filled me with apprehensions best described as grave. I began the actual writing at a low ebb of vitality, and had to grunt and pant all the way home. Two good researchers could have saved me all this grief, and might have had a salutary effect on the broadcast. Consider well this plaintive tale when some committee pops out of ambush and asks you to prepare an hour's broadcast on China, for three weeks from Wednesday.

(b) Most movie stars are hard-working, conscientious, considerate, and altogether

pleasant in a radio studio. Fredric March once showed up at a rehearsal wearing a surgeon's mask because he had a bad cold and did not want to give it to actors working across his mike. Charles Laughton has made extemporaneous curtain speeches to studio audiences, acknowledging the contribution of a radio writer or director to his performance. Margaret Sullavan was worried once because she suspected I was only politely pretending to be satisfied with her reading. Robert Montgomery applied himself with such energy and devotion to the first of the "This Is War" programs, that a couple of important radio actors in the cast were made to realize for the first time that there was a war on.

But one is bound to meet up sooner or later with the neurotic, the timid, the bored, the self-flagellating or the recalcitrant star, and then the director must be psychiatrist and diplomat as well as technician. In the case of this program, the stars were model. It was the first all-star "morale" production which did not consist of individual "acts"; in which all worked together; in which there was no separate identification. Some had only a few lines. But nobody complained of the brevity of his part, nobody was indifferent, nobody was late for rehearsal or asked to leave early. None demanded special billing. It was a co-operative non-profit affair, demonstrating plainly that stars in the aggregate are nice as pie.

Fact is, when a star finds himself among half a dozen others of his rank and salary, he forgets the usual trappings and complexes of stardom. And if the occasion is patriotic, he is tractable as can be. The largesse of most successful screen stars in matters affecting bond drives, camp entertainment, benefit shows and the like is especially notable in view of the fact that they work like slaves of the Pharaohs when they are making pictures. I have often wondered why the public has never called upon outstanding personages in other fields for similar benefit performances. Why, for example, doesn't the

Telephone & Telegraph Company donate a certain amount of military equipment to our army? Or Curtiss-Wright make a present of every five-hundredth plane to the men who are flying them? Show people are in business too.

(c) Bernard Herrmann is the first radio-trained composer to have been honored by a grant from the American Academy of Arts and Letters; he also won an Oscar from the Motion Picture Academy for his work in *All That Money Can Buy* (née *The Devil and Daniel Webster*), and his *Citizen Kane* music was generally acknowledged to rate among the very best scores ever recorded on sound track. None of this recognition has made the slightest difference to him. He has always been fiercely independent, shrilly outspoken, and utterly contemptuous of compromise. At this writing he still is. He believes a qualified radio composer knows more about music than a sponsor's wife or even a program director. I go along with him in this.

As usual in my scripts, I indicated the character and function of the music. As usual in his scores, Herrmann expanded and improved on the basic dramatic ideas, and engaged his own imagination to add color and dimension. The result was a score which fitted the production smartly as a nut fits a bolt. Radio music is seldom noticed by critics save when it is shockingly bad; *Variety* had this to say of Herrmann's job:

"... extremely resourceful, imaginative and authoritative . . . a full-scale collaboration in the sense that any would welcome. It was to this production what a good short-stop is to a baseball team."

(d) The dress rehearsal of this piece, which ended scarcely an hour before we went on the air, was smooth, tight and precise. Everybody was where he should have been at the right time, and the balances on the board were wondrous. But a great dress is considered an ill omen for a broadcast, and this case supports the superstition.

Things happened on the air show which

## *We Hold These Truths*

pained me considerably. One actor stretched his speech out of all proportion; another started an emotional passage at too high a pitch; a third gave me a reading I had not heard before. Here and there a cue was a half-second late. Through all this I kept subconsciously matching the performance point by point against the dress. The temptation to do this is great, and few are able to resist it. But the thing for a director to remember is that the listener has no such basis for comparison; that what might seem to him a horrible botch of a fine moment might seem to the listener pretty good anyway. Nobody in the audience the night of this show seemed to notice the flaws which struck me with sledgehammer blows. I could have spared myself the agony. I do not mean to imply here that one should condone or accept imperfections in a broadcast; I mean simply that a performance below the level of an inspired dress rehearsal is no reason to throw oneself in the river later in the evening.

(e) The broadcast was over. The President had spoken and Stokowski had conducted the national anthem. The million-dollar cast filed out past the control room. I stood like a minister at the exit, saying good-bys and thank-you's. And I felt miserable. I was sure the show had been a flop, and I burned with shame and disappointment.

There is a telephone in every CBS control room, and a mighty instrument it is. Few barometers of success are more dependable. A silent phone at the end of a show convinces a director that his production has taken place in a vacuum. After the end of this four-network colossus, that phone was silent. I took time mopping my brow and buttoning my collar, stalling for the call which must *surely* come in.

Nothing happened. Were the script and performance *that* bad? Had I disgraced the occasion? I had done broadcasts in my time—a dog story, a ballad, an opera, a story of a bombing plane—which had given CBS switchboards a busy run. Nothing like a

Mars panic, but times when as many as three hundred people were impulsive enough to call the station. Yet after this one, nobody called. Eight hundred stations and sixty-three million listeners, yet for all the calls it might have been a one-minute commercial for Atlas Beer.

I was about to leave the control room in low dudgeon when the phone rang. I made a dash for it. Maybe this was Washington. Or New York. Or at least somebody somewhere who would assure me the show had not gone as badly as I feared. I snatched the phone off the hook.

"Hello," it said.

"Yes?"

"May I speak to Corwin?"

"This is he."

"Oh. Hello. This is Joy."

"Joy?"

"Yes—don't you remember—we met at Lucy's last Christmas."

"Oh, sure. How are you?"

"Fine. I just heard your program."

"Oh, yes. How did you like it?"

"It was okay. Look—I'm giving a party next Tuesday night. Would you like to come?"

That was the sum total of fan calls. Some friends in the studio decided that what I needed was a stiff drink, and led me to it. Not until the next morning, when a storm of telegrams descended on Corporal Stewart, Herrmann, and myself, did I realize the program had created something of a sensation. It developed that the reason no calls came through after the broadcast was that listeners were uncertain as to where the program originated—in New York, Washington or Hollywood. It had come from all three places.

(f) It is ironic that a script about the Bill of Rights should itself have been a horrible example of what happens to a writer when he gets careless with copyright. Several publishers made bids for "We Hold These Truths," but because the program had been a public occasion and everybody had con-



## *Credos for Today*

tributed his part without fee, I felt that nobody, including myself, was entitled to make money out of its reproduction in any form. I therefore asked the OFF to grant publication rights to the highest bidder, and stipulated that all earnings from sales be given to a war relief.

I shall not go into gruesome details, but this gesture wound up with a publisher making antic changes in my text and taking out copyright in his own name—all without my knowledge or consent. My protests were not even acknowledged. The moral to writers is plain: protect your copyright even when giving things away.

*Additional Notes.* 1. From Lincoln's second inaugural address, March 4, 1865.

2. Played by Edward Arnold in the original broadcast.

3. At this point a mistake in the relaying of a signal caused Corporal Stewart to leave the isolation booth from which he had been speaking, and it was impossible for him to get back in time to deliver the line, "No. There will be no speeches." It will be noticed in the recordings of the broadcast distributed to schools and colleges by the United States Office of Education that there is a "hole," or unintentional moment of silence, where this line should be. It was by far the most serious of the flaws which kept taking years off my life as the air show rolled along, and which I have described under (d) above. (Sounds like an income-tax form as we go along. Notes (a), (b), (c), (d), and now 1, 2, 3.)

4. Played by Walter Huston.

5. Bob Burns.

6. Marjorie Main.

7. Arnold, doubling. Dane Clark (Bernard Zanville before Warner Brothers made him change his perfectly good name) played Sam.

8. At a luncheon with Archibald MacLeish in the Library just before I started writing the script, he told me that President Roose-

velt had told him that he (the President) was greatly impressed by the phrase "in full faith and credit" which the New York State Assembly wrote into its ratification of the Constitution. I agreed as how it *was* a striking phrase, and so included it at this point.

9. Orson Welles.

10. This speech is made up. I took the liberty of doing this because I was unable, in the little time I had, to pursue records of the session of the Virginia Assembly at which the Constitution was ratified. However, the matter of authenticity here is of small importance, because the speeches from the floor were faded down behind the Citizen's passage beginning, "These are the Voices of Virginians."

11. In this way the *raison d'être* of the broadcast was emphasized: Anniversary.

12. The characters of the post-ratification vignettes are, of course, the same ones as before.

13. Walter Brennan.

14. The uniqueness of Miss Main's quality and voice made her easily recognizable as the same Widow who was so angry with our Citizen in the pre-ratification montage. Otherwise the identification might have been risky, for the name of her dead husband, Robert, which appears in both sequences, is not sufficient to recall the earlier scene to the listener.

15. Rudy Vallee.

16. An old ballad found in several sources, including *Early American Sheet Music*, by Elliott Shapiro; and *A Treasury of American Song*, by Olin Downes and Elie Siegmeister (Knopf).

17. The number is now higher.

18. Edward G. Robinson.

19. The President never heard the broadcast. He was in conference on war matters until the minute he was to go on the air, and took his cue from an announcer at the White House.

## GEOGRAPHY OF THIS TIME

by ARCHIBALD MACLEISH

What is required of us is the recognition of the frontiers between the centuries. And to take heart: to cross over.

Those who are killed in the place between out of ignorance, those who wander like cattle and are shot, those who are shot and are left in the stone fields between the histories—these men may be pitied as the victims of accidents are pitied but their deaths do not signify. They are neither buried nor otherwise remembered but lie in the dead grass in the dry thorn in the worn light. Their years have no monuments.

There are many such in the sand here—many who did not perceive, who thought the time went on, the years went forward, the history was continuous—who thought tomorrow was of the same nation as today. There are many who came to the frontiers between the times and did not know them—who looked for the sentry-box at the stone bridge, for the barricade in the pines and the declaration in two languages—the warning and the opportunity to turn. They are dead there in the down light, in the sheep's barren.

From *The New Republic*, Oct. 28, 1942. Reprinted by permission of Mr. Archibald MacLeish and the editors.

What is required of us is the recognition

with no sign, with no word, with the roads raveled out into ruts and the ruts into dust and the dust stirred by the wind—the roads from behind us ending in the dust.

What is required of us is the recognition of the frontiers where the roads end.

We are very far. We are past the place where the light lifts from us and farther on than the relinquishment of leaves—farther even than the persistence in the east of the green color. Beyond are the confused tracks, the guns, the watchers.

What is required of us, Companions, is the recognition of the frontiers across this history, and to take heart: to cross over

—to persist and to cross over and survive

But to survive

To cross over



## PART X · MANIFESTOES FOR TOMORROW

THE HUMAN PROBLEMS with which the preceding parts of this book have been concerned are not new; in their essentials they have been met by previous generations. Many others before us have felt with Arnold the sensation of "wandering between two worlds." And it has been this very awareness of our historical position, an unintended offspring of nineteenth-century investigations into the nature of the "historical sense," that has complicated and intensified the problems for us. Arnold's poem, "Dover Beach," is as relevant today as when it was written, for we know the smashing powers that may be let loose if we are not "true to one another."

Thus fortified with a sense of community with the past, we can begin to apply the immense powers with which our technology has provided us and which are, for better or worse, here for us to use. We can remember, with Ortega, that "there is no reason to deny the reality of progress, but there is to correct the notion that believes this progress secure." We can force the direction of our progress by awareness of the general principles in our culture, by a liberal and realistic understanding of our needs, as Cohen points out, and by a thorough realization that we must choose, that the man who is truly obsolete is the one who will not or feels he cannot choose.

We are brought back then to the individual, for whom decisions about the direction and order of his time are moral issues. If he is able to embrace something like Lippmann's "religion of the spirit," which will transcend the self-created obstacles in his thinking, if he is capable of self-discipline and wisdom in governing himself, if he will accept the responsibility, posed by Wylie, of becoming better so that there may be a better world, then we will find our answer to the awful threats and dangers implicit in the group of pictures reproduced at the beginning of this book. We can cease to live in what Reves calls a Ptolemaic world and accept our places, as individuals first of all, under a common law. The ultimate choice is ours, individually.

## DOVER BEACH

by MATTHEW ARNOLD

The sea is calm to-night,  
The tide is full, the moon lies fair  
Upon the straits;—on the French coast the  
light

Gleams and is gone; the cliffs of England  
stand,

Glimmering and vast, out in the tranquil  
bay.

Come to the window, sweet is the night-  
air!

Only, from the long line of spray  
Where the sea meets the moon-blanch'd  
land.

Listen! you hear the grating roar  
Of pebbles which the waves draw back,  
and fling,

At their return, up the high strand,  
Begin, and cease, and then again begin,  
With tremulous cadence slow, and bring  
The eternal note of sadness in.

Sophocles long ago  
Heard it on the Aegæan, and it brought  
Into his mind the turbid ebb and flow

Of human misery; we  
Find also in the sound a thought;  
Hearing it by this distant northern sea.

The Sea of Faith  
Was once, too, at the full, and round  
earth's shore

Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furled.

But now I only hear

Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,  
Retreating, to the breath

Of the night-wind, down the vast edges  
drear

And naked shingles of the world.

Ah, love, let us be true

To one another! for the world, which  
seems

To lie before us like a land of dreams,

So various, so beautiful, so new,

Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,

Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;

And we are here as on a darkling plain

Swept with confused alarms of struggle  
and flight,

Where ignorant armies clash by night.

## THE PRIMITIVE AND THE TECHNICAL

by JOSÉ ORTEGA Y GASSET

IT IS MUCH to my purpose to recall that we are here engaged in the analysis of a situation—the actual one—which is of its essence ambiguous. Hence I suggested at the start that all the features of the present day, and in particular the rebellion of the masses, offer a double aspect. Any one of them not only admits of, but requires, a

double interpretation, favorable and unfavorable. And this ambiguity lies, not in our minds, but in the reality itself. It is not that the present situation may appear to us good from one viewpoint, and evil from another, but that in itself it contains the twin potencies of triumph or of death.

There is no call to burden this essay with

From *The Revolt of the Masses* by José Ortega y Gasset. Published by W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.

## *The Primitive and the Technical*

a complete philosophy of history. But it is evident that I am basing it on the underlying foundation of my own philosophical convictions. I do not believe in the absolute determinism of history. On the contrary, I believe that all life, and consequently the life of history, is made up of simple moments, each of them relatively undetermined in respect of the previous one, so that in its reality hesitates, walks up and down, and is uncertain whether to decide for one or other of various possibilities. It is this metaphysical hesitancy which gives to everything living its unmistakable character of tremulous vibration. The rebellion of the masses *may*, in fact, be the transition to some new, unexampled organization of humanity, but it *may* also be a catastrophe of human destiny. There is no reason to deny the reality of progress, but there is to correct the notion that believes this progress secure. It is more in accordance with facts to hold that there is no certain progress, no evolution, without the threat of "involution," of retrogression. Everything is possible in history; triumphant, indefinite progress equally with periodic retrogression. For life, individual or collective, personal or historic, is the one entity in the universe whose substance is compact of danger, of adventure. It is, in the strict sense of the word, drama.<sup>1</sup>

This, which is true in general, acquires greater force in "moments of crisis" such

as the present. And so, the symptoms of new conduct which are appearing under the actual dominion of the masses, and which we have grouped under the term "direct action," *may* also announce future perfections. It is evident that every old civilization drags with it in its advance worn-out tissues and no small load of callous matter, which form an obstacle to life, mere toxic dregs. There are dead institutions, valuations and estimates which still survive, though now meaningless, unnecessarily complicated solutions, standards whose lack of substance has been proved. All these constituents of "indirect action," of civilization, demand a period of feverish simplification. The tall hat and frock-coat of the romantic period are avenged by means of present-day *déshabillé* and "shirt-sleeves." Here, the simplification means hygiene and better taste, consequently a more perfect solution, as always happens when more is obtained by smaller means. The tree of romantic love also was badly in need of pruning in order to shed the abundance of imitation magnolias tacked on to its branches and the riot of creepers, spirals, and tortuous ramifications which deprived it of the sun.

In general, public life and above all politics, urgently needed to be brought back to reality, and European humanity could not turn the somersault which the optimist demands of it, without first taking off its

<sup>1</sup> Needless to say, hardly anyone will take seriously these expressions, and even the best-intentioned will understand them as mere metaphors, though perhaps striking ones. Only an odd reader, ingenuous enough not to believe that he already knows definitively what life is, or at least what it is not, will allow himself to be won over by the primary meaning of these phrases, and will be precisely the one who will *understand* them—be they true or false. Amongst the rest there will reign the most effusive unanimity, with this solitary difference: some will think that, *speaking seriously*, life is the process of existence of a soul, and others that it is a succession of chemical reactions. I do not conceive that it will improve my position with readers so hermetically sealed to resume my whole line of thought by saying that the *primary, radical* meaning of life appears when it is employed in the sense not of biology, but of biography. For the very strong reason that the whole of biology is quite definitely only a chapter in certain biographies, it is what biologists do in the portion of their lives open to biography. Anything else is abstraction, fantasy and myth.

clothes, getting down to its bare essence, returning to its real self. The enthusiasm which I feel for this discipline of stripping oneself bare, of being one's real self, the belief that it is indispensable in order to clear the way to a worthy future, leads me to claim full liberty of thought with regard to everything in the past. It is the future which must prevail over the past, and from it we take our orders regarding our attitude towards what has been.<sup>2</sup>

But it is necessary to avoid the great sin of those who directed the XIXth Century, the lack of recognition of their responsibilities which prevented them from keeping alert and on the watch. To let oneself slide down the easy slope offered by the course of events and to dull one's mind against the extent of the danger, the unpleasant features which characterize even the most joyous hour, that is precisely to fail in one's obligation of responsibility. Today it has become necessary to stir up an exaggerated sense of responsibility in those capable of feeling it, and it seems of supreme urgency to stress the evidently dangerous aspect of present-day symptoms.

There is no doubt that on striking a balance of our public life the adverse factors far outweigh the favorable ones, if the calculation be made not so much in regard to the present, as to what they announce and promise for the future.

All the increased material possibilities which life has experienced run the risk of being annulled when they are faced with the staggering problem that has come upon the destiny of Europe, and which I

once more formulate: the direction of society has been taken over by a type of man who is not interested in the principles of civilization. Not of this or that civilization but—from what we can judge today—of any civilization. Of course, he is interested in anesthetics, motor-cars, and a few other things. But this fact merely confirms his fundamental lack of interest in civilization. For those things are merely its products, and the fervor with which he greets them only brings into stronger relief his indifference to the principles from which they spring. It is sufficient to bring forward this fact: since the *nuove scienze*, the natural sciences, came into being—from the Renaissance on, that is to say—the enthusiasm for them had gone on increasing through the course of time. To put it more concretely, the proportionate number of people who devoted themselves to pure scientific research was in each generation greater. The first case of retrogression—relative, I repeat—has occurred in the generation of those between twenty and thirty at the present time. It is becoming difficult to attract students to the laboratories of pure science. And this is happening when industry is reaching its highest stage of development, and when people in general are showing still greater appetite for the use of the apparatus and the medicines created by science. If we did not wish to avoid prolixity, similar incongruity could be shown in politics, art, morals, religion, and in the everyday activities of life.

What is the significance to us of so paradoxical a situation? This essay is an at-

<sup>2</sup> This freedom of attitude towards the past is not, then, a peevish revolt, but, on the contrary, an evident obligation, on the part of every "period of criticism." If I defend the liberalism of the XIXth Century against the masses which rudely attack it, this does not mean that I renounce my full freedom of opinion as regards that same liberalism. And vice versa, the primitivism which in this essay appears in its worst aspect is in a certain sense a condition of every great historic advance. Compare what, a few years ago, I said on this matter in the essay "Biología y Pedagogía" (*El Espectador*, III, *La paradoja del salvajismo*).

## *The Primitive and the Technical*

ttempt to prepare the answer to that question. The meaning is that the type of man dominant today is a primitive one, a *Naturmensch* rising up in the midst of a civilized world. The world is a civilized one, its inhabitant is not: he does not see the civilization of the world around him, but he uses it as if it were a natural force. The new man wants his motor-car, and enjoys it, but he believes that it is the spontaneous fruit of an Edenic tree. In the depths of his soul he is unaware of the artificial, almost incredible, character of civilization, and does not extend his enthusiasm for the instruments to the principles which make them possible. When some pages back, by a transposition of the words of Rathenau, I said that we are witnessing the "vertical invasion of the barbarians" it might be thought (it generally is) that it was only a matter of a "phrase." It is now clear that the expression may enshrine a truth or an error, but that it is the very opposite of a "phrase," namely: a formal definition which sums up a whole complicated analysis. The actual mass-man is, in fact, a primitive who has slipped through the wings onto the age-old stage of civilization.

There is continual talk today of the fabulous progress of technical knowledge; but I see no signs in this talk, even amongst the best, of a sufficiently dramatic realization of its future. Spengler himself, so subtle and profound—though so subject to mania—appears to me in this matter far too optimistic. For he believes that "culture" is to be succeeded by an era of "civilization," by which word he understands more especially technical efficiency. The

idea that Spengler has of "culture" and of history in general is so remote from that underlying this essay, that it is not easy, even for the purpose of correction, to comment here upon his conclusions. It is only by taking great leaps and neglecting exact details, in order to bring both viewpoints under a common denominator, that it is possible to indicate the difference between us. Spengler believes that "technicism" can go on living when interest in the principles underlying culture are dead. I cannot bring myself to believe any such thing. Technicism and science are consubstantial, and science no longer exists when it ceases to interest for itself alone, and it cannot so interest unless men continue to feel enthusiasm for the general principles of culture. If this fervor is deadened—as appears to be happening—technicism can only survive for a time, for the duration of the inertia of the cultural impulse which started it. We live with our technical requirements, but not *by* them. These give neither nourishment nor breath to themselves, they are not *causae sui*, but a useful, practical precipitate of superfluous, unpractical activities.<sup>8</sup> I proceed, then, to the position that the actual interest in technical accomplishment guarantees nothing, less than nothing, for the progress or the duration of such accomplishment. It is quite right that technicism should be considered one of the characteristic features of "modern culture," that is to say, of a culture which comprises a species of science which proves materially profitable. Hence, when describing the newest aspect of the existence implanted by the XIXth Century, I was left with these two features: liberal democracy

<sup>8</sup> Hence, to my mind, a definition of North America by its "technicism" tells us nothing. One of the things that most seriously confuse the European mind is the mass of puerile judgments that one hears pronounced on North America even by the most cultured persons. This is one particular case of the disproportion which I indicate later on as existing between the complexity of present-day problems and the capacity of present-day minds.



## Manifestoes for Tomorrow

and technicism. But I repeat that I am astonished at the ease with which when speaking of technicism it is forgotten that its vital center is pure science, and that the conditions for its continuance involve the same conditions that render possible pure scientific activity. Has any thought been given to the number of things that must remain active in men's souls in order that there may still continue to be "men of science" in real truth? Is it seriously thought that as long as there are dollars there will be science? This notion in which so many find rest is only a further proof of primitivism. As if there were not numberless ingredients, of most disparate nature, to be brought together and shaken up in order to obtain the cocktail of physico-chemical science! Under even the most perfunctory examination of this subject, the evident fact bursts into view that over the whole extent of space and time, physico-chemistry has succeeded in establishing itself completely only in the small quadrilateral enclosed by London, Berlin, Vienna, and Paris, and that only in the XIXth Century. This proves that experimental science is one of the most unlikely products of history. Seers, priests, warriors and shepherds have abounded in all times and places. But this fauna of experimental man apparently requires for its production a combination of circumstances more exceptional than those that engender the unicorn. Such a bare, sober fact should make us reflect a little on the supervolatile, evaporative character of scientific inspiration.<sup>4</sup> Blissful the man who believes that, were Europe to disappear, the North Americans could *continue* science! It would be of great value to treat the mat-

ter thoroughly and to specify in detail what are the historical presuppositions, vital to experimental science and, consequently, to technical accomplishment. But let no one hope that, even when this point was made clear, the mass-man would understand. The mass-man has no attention to spare for reasoning, he learns only in his own flesh.

There is one observation which bars me from deceiving myself as to the efficacy of such preachments, which by the fact of being based on reason would necessarily be subtle. Is it not altogether absurd that, under actual circumstances, the average man does not feel spontaneously, and without being preached at, an ardent enthusiasm for those sciences and the related ones of biology? For, just consider what the actual situation is. While evidently all the other constituents of culture—politics, art, social standards, morality itself—have become problematic, there is one which increasingly demonstrates, in a manner most indisputable and most suitable to impress the mass-man, its marvelous efficiency: and that one is empirical science. Every day furnishes a new invention which this average man utilizes. Every day produces a new anesthetic or vaccine from which this average man benefits. Everyone knows that, if scientific inspiration does not weaken and the laboratories are multiplied three times or ten times, there will be an automatic multiplication of wealth, comfort, health, prosperity. Can any more formidable, more convincing propaganda be imagined in favor of a vital principle? How is it, nevertheless, that there is no sign of the masses imposing on themselves any sacrifice of money or attention in order

<sup>4</sup> This, without speaking of more internal questions. The majority of the investigators themselves have not today the slightest suspicion of the very grave and dangerous internal crisis through which their science is passing.

## *The Primitive and the Technical*

to endow science more worthily? Far from this being the case, the post-war period has converted the man of science into a new social pariah. And note that I am referring to physicists, chemists, biologists, not to philosophers. Philosophy needs neither protection, attention nor sympathy from the masses. It maintains its character of complete inutility,<sup>5</sup> and thereby frees itself from all subservience to the average man. It recognizes itself as essentially-problematic, and joyously accepts its free destiny as a bird of the air, without asking anybody to take it into account, without recommending or defending itself. If it does really turn out to the advantage of anyone, it rejoices from simple human sympathy; but does not live on the profit it brings to others, neither anticipating it nor hoping for it. How can it lay claim to being taken seriously by anyone if it starts off by doubting its own existence, if it lives only in the measure in which it combats itself, deprives itself of life? Let us, then, leave out of the question philosophy, which is an adventure of another order. But the experimental sciences do need the co-operation of the mass-man, just as he needs them, under pain of dissolution, in as much as in a planet without physico-chemistry the number of beings existing today cannot be sustained.

What arguments can bring about something which has not been brought about by the motor-car in which those men come and go, and the pantopon injection which destroys, *miraculously*, their pains? The disproportion between the constant, evi-

dent benefit which science procures them and the interest they show in it is such that it is impossible today to deceive oneself with illusory hopes and to expect anything but barbarism from those who so behave. *Especially if, as we shall see, this disregard of science as such appears, with possibly more evidence than elsewhere, in the mass of technicians themselves—doctors, engineers, etc., who are in the habit of exercising their profession in a state of mind identical in all essentials to that of the man who is content to use his motor-car or buy his tube of aspirin—without the slightest intimate solidarity with the future of science, of civilization.*

There may be those who feel more disturbed by other symptoms of emergent barbarism which, being positive in quality, results of action and not of omission, strike the attention more, materialize into a spectacle. For myself, this matter of the disproportion between the profit which the average man draws from science and the gratitude which he returns—or, rather, does not return—to it; this is much more terrifying.<sup>6</sup> I can only succeed in explaining to myself this absence of adequate recognition by recalling that in Central Africa the Negroes also ride in motor-cars and dose themselves with aspirin. The European who is beginning to predominate—so runs my hypothesis—must then be, *in relation to the complex civilization into which he has been born*, a primitive man, a barbarian appearing on the stage through the trap-door, a "vertical invader."

<sup>5</sup> Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 893a. 10.

<sup>6</sup> The monstrosity is increased a hundredfold by the fact that, as I have indicated, all the other vital principles, politics, law, art, morals, religion, are actually passing through a crisis, are at least temporarily bankrupt. Science alone is not bankrupt; rather does it every day pay out, with fabulous interest, all and more than it promises. It is, then, without a competitor; it is impossible to excuse the average man's disregard of it by considering him distracted from it by some other cultural enthusiasm.

## THE FUTURE OF AMERICAN LIBERALISM

by MORRIS R. COHEN

TO AFFIRM a faith in liberalism may seem quixotic at a time when the word "liberalism" is commonly associated either with an outmoded individualistic theory of economics or with a political trend that shuns clear thinking and seems to offer a special haven to those mushy-minded persons who, rather than make a definite choice between Heaven and Hell, cheerfully hope to combine the best features of each. But liberalism and liberal civilization may be conceived more generously. For my part I prefer to think of the liberal temper as, above all, a faith in enlightenment, a faith in a process rather than in a set of doctrines, a faith instilled with pride in the achievements of the human mind, and yet colored with a deep humility before the vision of a world so much larger than our human hopes and thoughts. If there are those who have no use for the word "faith" they may fairly define liberalism as a rationalism that is rational enough to envisage the limitations of mere reasoning.

Liberalism is too often misconceived as a new set of dogmas taught by a newer and better set of priests called "liberals." Liberalism is an attitude rather than a set of dogmas—an attitude that insists upon questioning all plausible and self-evident propositions, seeking not to reject them but to find out what evidence there is to support them rather than their possible alternatives. This open eye for possible alternatives which need to be scrutinized before we can determine which is the best grounded is profoundly disconcerting to all conservatives and to almost all revolutionaries. Conservatism clings to what has

been established, fearing that, once we begin to question the beliefs that we have inherited, all the values of life will be destroyed. The revolutionary, impressed with the evil of the existing order or disorder, is prone to put his faith in some mighty-sounding principle without regard for the complications, compromises, dangers, and hardships that will be involved in the adjustment of this principle to other worthy principles. Revolutionaries and reactionaries alike are irritated and perhaps inwardly humiliated by the humane temper of liberalism, which reveals by contrast the common inhumanity of both violent parties to the social struggle. Liberalism, on the other hand, regards life as an adventure in which we must take risks in new situations, in which there is no guarantee that the new will always be the good or the true, in which progress is a precarious achievement rather than an inevitability.

The fanatic clings to his one principle and in its defense is ready to shut the gates of mercy on mankind, precisely because he cannot see any alternative to it except utter chaos or iniquity. Rational reflection, however, opens our minds to other possibilities. It enables us to see that most of the "yes or no" questions on which political debate centers at any given time involve false alternatives and unduly narrow assumptions that unnecessarily limit the scope of possible solutions. Thus the liberal, while generally provoking the hostility of both sides in any current dispute, sometimes develops a solution which shows that the dispute was a mistake. How many

## *The Future of American Liberalism*

issues have arisen in our own generation which were supposed to be so critical that a wrong response would condemn us to unending suffering and a correct response would bring us a heaven on earth! And how often these issues have been resolved or forgotten without bringing the blessings or the tragedies that were anticipated by both parties to the dispute!

Liberalism has been viewed historically as that philosophy which regards the exercise of human energy as in itself a good, which becomes evil only when it becomes self-defeating. It is opposed to the view that regards the natural desires of the flesh as inherently evil and justified only under certain restricted and properly sanctioned conditions. Liberalism is thus a reaction against all views which favor repression or which regard the denial of natural desires as in itself a good.

Liberalism so conceived is concerned with the liberation of the mind from the restraints of authoritarianism and fanaticism. As opposed to the policies of fear and suppression, based on the principle that nature is sin and intellect the devil, the aim of liberalism is to liberate the energies of human nature by the free and fearless use of reason. Liberalism disregards rules and dogmas that hinder the freedom of scientific inquiry and the questioning of all accepted truths. Prophets, priestly hierarchies, sacred books, and sanctified traditions must submit their claims to the court of human reason and experience. In this way mankind wins freedom from superstitious fears, such as that of magic or witchcraft, and from arbitrary and cruel restraints on human happiness. Liberalism in general thus means the opening up of opportunities in all fields of human endeavor, together with an emphasis on the

value of deliberative rather than arbitrary forces in the governance of practical affairs.

It is characteristic of the liberal temper that it combines generosity towards ideas with a sense of discrimination. To be generous towards all ideas is an attitude possible only for barbarians to whom few ideas are revealed. At the opposite extreme of intolerance lies the realm of the fanatic to whom all that lies outside a single doctrine is false. Those of us who are not of the Moslem faith can afford to smile at the narrowness of the Mohammedan who observed that it is unnecessary to read current literature because either all the ideas contained therein are already contained in the Koran, in which case the new books are superfluous; or they are not contained in the Koran, in which case they must be false. But most of us are not so sensitive in detecting the absurdity of our own fanaticisms.

Ultimately civilization, like life in general, involves a balance between the expansive or centrifugal forces which make for diversity and adventure, and the constraining or centripetal forces which make for organization and safety. Life, in point of fact, is impossible without both of these forces. Without the expansive forces we should not be able to adjust ourselves to an ever changing environment. But without the restraining forces which originate from fear we should rush headlong into ruin. Human impulses going in diverse directions would disintegrate life. Nor can we afford to forget that animal drives lead not only to the preservation of life but also to inevitable death.

The life of civilization, like the life of each organism, oscillates between opposite extremes. The law of life is not a law of

constant and inevitable progress but rather a law of rhythm, of growth and decay, of anabolism and katabolism. At certain points in world history liberal civilization has flowered: in shifting parts of Western Europe and America since the Renaissance, in China in the age of Confucius, in Egypt in the Alexandrian period, in India in the period of the rise of Buddhism, and again in the period of Akbar and the Mongol Emperors, but above all, and most brilliantly, in Greece during the age of Pericles. But these periods are, typically, preceded and superseded by ages of immobility or retrogression. One may find in the life of the race an analogy to the change of seasons. Liberalism is the spring-time, and our hopes flower when sunshine and warm rains fructify the soil, but the Olympian gods of the sky and clouds come after the chthonic or underground deities and they are in turn followed or overthrown by Dionysius or Pan, the source of panic. To discover the calendar or formula that governs human history is a task to which scientists, philosophers, prophets, and poets have devoted much high aspiration and generous effort. I have no ambition to compete with such a prophet as Spengler, who not only is certain that the civilization of the West is doomed but has figured out the exact date of its destruction. My purpose is less subjective and more limited; in pursuing it, therefore, one can be a little more attentive to evidence. In seeking to trace the course of liberalism in America it is possible to isolate a few of the basic characteristics of the civilization that has flourished in this country since the days of George Washington, and to note the ways in which changing years have strengthened or weakened our traditional faith.

One may well contend that there was nothing remarkably liberal in seventeenth-century America when Governor Berkeley of our largest colony thanked God that there were no printing presses or public schools in his domain. Nor would it appear that the Puritan North with its theological narrowness and intolerance offered much that could genuinely be called liberal. Yet the seeds of liberalism were there, first in the custom of choosing local officials by ballot. Then also in religious life the laymen naturally began to play a larger role in determining church policies. There was also, even in the stern Calvinism, a liberal element in so far as it cut the ground from under all ideas of aristocracy or snobbery by reducing all human beings to the same level. The Puritan who said when he saw a man led to the gallows, "There, but for the grace of God, go I," had in him the most fruitful source of the democratic spirit, which regards externals of rank and the like as of no inherent importance. Moreover, even in the seventeenth century, men like Roger Williams began to lay down explicitly one of the principles that we now regard as essential for any true liberalism, namely, the separation of Church and State. This religious liberalism became a dominant note in American life with the deism of the eighteenth century. And though the various Evangelical movements have brought at times a reaction against this, the ideas of tolerance developed by Locke have remained dominant.

What are the fundamental characteristics of American civilization as the Founders of our Republic conceived it? The first essential point, I think, is the view that people have a right to govern themselves,

## *The Future of American Liberalism*

to change their form of government by a revolution and to establish their independence—what we call today the right of self-determination. The old idea was that government rested on divine authority and that all resistance to it was sinful. The Colonists asserted the rights of man as opposed to the rights of kings, insisting that the just powers of any government rest ultimately on the consent of the governed; and, hence, that the people have a right to rebel against an unjust government.

That is a right which Americans have claimed for over a hundred and fifty years. This conception of the right of revolution as based on the rights of man is part of the classic tradition and of the liberal philosophy of the eighteenth century. The American Revolution was an expression of it, both in theory and in practice. We generally associate Thomas Jefferson, the author of the Declaration of Independence, with that theory, but George Washington certainly represents the practical side of that movement for independence and self-determination. The influence of the Declaration of Independence and of the agrarian democracy of Thomas Jefferson has been so attuned to the conditions of independent small property owners thinly spread over a wide land that this has become the basic stream of American political thought. Even in the South the existence of slavery could not overthrow this ideology. The extension of the suffrage and the custom of frequent elections have strengthened the feeling that every man has a right to participate in the government and at least to run for office, if not to hold it. Political liberalism has thus also included the right to criticize not only government officials but also the methods of administration.

Closely connected with the conception of independence and self-determination was the policy of isolation—of “no entangling alliances.” That meant that since the European monarchies were too much wedded to the old ways, we as a nation, having been conceived in liberty and the rights of man, were to go our own way. Washington’s Farewell Address is the classic expression of that point of view. This ideal of isolation, of separateness—a kind of political holiness—was undoubtedly a dominant idea of American civilization for the first hundred years of our national existence.

Connected with this conception of the right of revolution, the rights of man, the right of independence, and the right to be an isolated nation, there were other policies which were a part of our traditional liberalism. The first in time of these was complete subordination of the army to the civil authorities. Washington, as Commander in Chief, did his part in disbanding the army and having its members re-enter civil life. As President, he also stood for the same policy of subordination of the military to the civil authorities, and in the main this has been the policy of the United States. We did not believe in standing armies at the time when all European nations had them. We did not believe in conscription.

Recently there has been considerable agitation on the point, and some people think that we have made a mistake. In other words, the position of traditional American liberalism on this point has been challenged. People think we need a stronger navy and a larger army. The traditional idea that we do not need a large army and conscription was aided by the idea of isolation: if we do not covet our neighbor’s goods, our neighbor will not

## *Manifestoes for Tomorrow*

attack us. That is one way of putting the traditional American liberal policy.

Connected with this was also the conception of separation of Church and State. The connection between Church and State in Europe is largely political. In France, for instance, there are a large number of people who feel that France should be a Catholic nation, but that it is not important for a man to believe in the dogmas of the Catholic Church. A man can be, like Charles Maurras, an unbeliever or an atheist and a Catholic. But to be a patriotic citizen one must belong to the National Church.

Such a conception of the relation between Church and State is the direct opposite of the conception which prevailed in the United States for the first hundred years. The separation of Church and State, of course, was largely due to historical conditions, to the fact that there were different churches in the different colonies. Nevertheless, one point cannot be disputed, namely, that the separation of Church and State became a part of our traditional liberal civilization.

One of the most basic elements of American liberalism has been the ideal of federalism. The United States is the only great world power that has assumed the form of a federal republic, but few seem to realize how profoundly this is reflected in our whole life. For not only in the legal and political realm, but in our religious and cultural life as well, we have been a free federation aiming not at a monarchic uniformity, which is jealous of all diversity, but rather at a unity which encourages the freest development of the component states.

States that value military efficiency above all else are ruthless in their pursuit of a unity which excludes all internal differences; hence the frightful persecution of

all dissenters by Nazi Germany, of Finns, Jews, and Poles by the Russian Czars, and of the Slavs by the Magyars of Hungary. In opposition to this tendency, which, when successful, leads to a dead uniformity, we have the centrifugal tendencies of dissenting minorities or nationalities who will not abdicate one iota of their peculiarities. The history of the Balkans, of Poland, or of heretical sects generally, shows the anarchic and disintegrating results of this tendency. Obviously human welfare requires neither bare uniformity nor mere diversity but a wise use of both. Wisdom, however, is a rare attainment. The history of philosophy shows that those who have been delegated to pursue wisdom have, in their disputes about the one and the many, simply duplicated in the intellectual realm the devastating struggle between the fanatical worshipers of unity and the blind worshipers of diversity or independence. From this point of view, therefore, our federal system appears as a remarkable achievement in human wisdom.

When our Federal Constitution was adopted, all parties regarded it as a poor compromise—it satisfied neither those who wanted a strong national government nor those who were anxious to preserve the independence of the states. But precisely because merchants and farmers, descendants of Cavaliers, Puritans, Dutch, and Scotch-Irish were all willing to compromise, the constitution proved a remarkable working plan of government. It broke down temporarily when people refused to compromise on the question of states' rights which involved the basic issue of slave vs. free land economy. The outcome of the Civil War showed that the United States was a real union, and the readmission of the revolting states on a footing

## *The Future of American Liberalism*

of political equality with the loyal states emphasized its character as a union of states.

Our federal system has, at least until very recently, persisted in its hostility to undue centralization. It has emphasized the value of local autonomy and self-expression, and this political and religious federalism has been hostile to what has been the greatest enemy of democracy in Europe—namely, large standing armies with a sharp distinction between commissioned officers coming from the upper classes and the plain soldiers representing the masses.

The conditions of American economic life also have been unfavorable to any artificial restraints on commerce between the different parts of the country. Americans have been opposed to monopoly and in the main have felt that everyone should have an opportunity regardless of pedigree.

The fear of overcentralized government is still a powerful sentiment in this country. The prevailing sense of the American people will not allow a uniform or national divorce law, or a national system of education, any more than it will allow a national church. The principles of states' rights and home rule are still very much alive. Under the pressure of military demands we have had to increase the powers of the central government. For this, federal legislation in the last four decades on questions of railroads, banking, pure food, labor relations, and social security has prepared the way. But in trying to defend our national life the danger is that we may sacrifice those liberal traits which have made it so well worth defending. The greatness of America has been largely based on the fact that it has been a land of opportunity—spiritual as well as material. It has allowed the various constituent groups to develop freely and make their distinctive

contribution to the common life. The ideal of "E Pluribus Unum" is realized not by a melting-pot where all diversity of form is lost, but by a thoroughly trained orchestra where each in a distinctive way contributes to the common end.

I might mention other elements of what we have called American liberal civilization. But the upshot of it all is a certain glorification of freedom. That glorification showed itself in different forms. For instance, it glorified the United States as a haven of refuge for the oppressed of all nations. All were welcome here, especially those who had fought for republicanism against monarchy. Our immigration laws were liberal—almost anybody could come in. We prided ourselves upon the fact that we did not suppress differences of opinion. Anybody who wished to preach any particular doctrine—"Single Tax," Christian Science, "No cooked food," anything at all—was allowed free opportunity. We prided ourselves upon various other forms of complete freedom: freedom of the press, no government press, no government censorship, and so on.

All these things were an integral part of a certain complex of institutions which might fitly be called the traditional American liberalism. At the beginning of this century this traditional American liberalism was pronounced dead by a great American philosopher, William James. In addressing the Anti-Imperialist League he said in effect: We had better disband. We have been fighting to preserve the peculiar traditional American liberalism, which is inconsistent with imperialism. That liberalism, based on isolation and a free land economy, is dead. We have, for good or evil, entered into the arena with other nations. We are producing goods for other nations. We are going to have



investments abroad. We can no longer maintain our isolation. We might as well recognize this and join with our natural comrades in other nations in the fight which is raging all over between liberalism and its enemies.

That was a startling remark to make at the beginning of the twentieth century. But the development of the following decades demonstrated its profound wisdom. There is no doubt that we have become imperialistic. We have had a number of wars now in which the President of the United States, without the consent of Congress, has invaded the territory of other nations. During President Wilson's administration, our armies invaded Mexico, and practically made war on Russia. Our invasion of Mexico was ruled by the War Department itself to have been a war. The official name for the shooting in Nicaragua is as yet undetermined, but it was in fact a war of invasion.

If my points are well taken, it is evident that as a nation we have lost faith in our old liberalism. We are in the process of losing respect for the right of revolution. Revolutionists are not in good repute. Though we talk of protecting the rights of minorities, there is a strong tendency to establish uniformity in all fields, to wipe out cultural differences. A certain disrespect has developed for the rights of man, and for liberties which formerly were regarded as sacred. For instance, one of the fundamental political rights, which the Constitution guarantees to every citizen of the United States, is the right to petition Congress. And yet, during the First World War, a great university, which naturally upholds the Constitution, dismissed a professor because he wrote a letter to Congress asking that conscripted men be not sent abroad. I do not believe that this

was the actual reason for his dismissal, but it was the reason alleged. And it is most significant that the Board of Trustees of a great university had not sufficient respect for the Constitution to know that by acknowledging that reason they were throwing the Constitution to the wind. In recent years we have had people arrested for reading the Declaration of Independence in public. All such things, of which examples could be multiplied indefinitely, indicate a general disinclination on the part of the public to take the old rights very seriously.

There are many indications of a declining faith in the republican form of government—certainly a declining enthusiasm for it.

When a republic was first established in Hungary, our State Department characterized the Russian attempt to suppress it by force as criminal and offered to provide a warship to bring its first president, Kossuth, to our shores. Kossuth's visit to the United States was a national occasion for the display of our sympathy for republicanism. He was almost universally acclaimed in all parts of America. Contrast with this the fact that the second president of the Hungarian Republic Count Karolyi, was not even allowed to enter this country! The United States was the last nation to recognize the Republic of Portugal, and we helped Hitler and Mussolini crush the Spanish Republic by preventing the sale of arms to the people, who, after an orderly election, had set up the Republic of Spain, although we were in treaty bound to full and free trade relations, and the republic was ready to pay in gold for all goods sent to it.

Hence an historian, looking at the history of American civilization in a large perspective, might well say that since the

## *The Future of American Liberalism*

Spanish-American War there has been a decline in faith in the old liberal American civilization. After that war came the conquest of the Philippines, which had almost succeeded in overthrowing the yoke of Spain. Annexation was principally dictated by expansion of American trade and all the involvements that go with it. That interpretation of our history, I think, would be very just and significant. Civilizations frequently change by conquest even more than they are changed by being conquered. For instance, Greek civilization was profoundly transformed by the conquest of Asia. Spanish civilization was profoundly transformed, and for the worse, because of the conquest of America. Portuguese civilization was paralyzed by the conquest of Africa. And so on! Civilization changes not merely by growth within, but also by contact with others. There is no doubt in any case about the radical transformations which may be called the "fall" of the liberal civilization that prevailed in the first century of our history. It has certainly disintegrated. It may revive; it may not. It seems to me it cannot revive in its old form because it was based upon a free land economy and isolation from foreign countries, both of which are physically impossible today. Therefore, I entirely agree with William James that that form of liberal civilization is dead.

### III

We are now entering into the world arena, and the question is no longer that of the special type of liberal civilization which once existed in the United States, but whether any type of liberal civilization can exist in our America. Liberal civilization has existed in many forms in many nations. What is its essence? Here again

it is safer to indicate realities and let the result coin its own definition.

Liberal civilization came to the fore in Europe in the middle of the eighteenth century. It was a movement which banished the Inquisition, abolished the despotic power of kings, and broke up the system of censorship and of political and economic privilege in relation to taxation, trade, and obedience to oppressive laws. It was necessary to wage a long fight before monopoly privileges were taken away from the old aristocracy. The movement to extend education to everybody came to full force only in the nineteenth century. It was the nineteenth century that saw the removal of limitations on the suffrage as well as those on holding public office: property qualifications, religious affiliations, and the like. The liberal movement was directed to the wiping out of such restraints. The emancipation of women and their final admission to the privilege of the suffrage has occurred within our own day.

If a formula is necessary for all this, I would suggest that liberalism means a pride in human achievement, a faith in human effort, a conviction that the proper function of government is to remove the restraints upon human activity. The philosophy back of that is summed up in two great faiths or beliefs: the belief in progress, and the belief in toleration. I think those are the two fundamental ideas of liberalism.

The idea of progress can hardly be understood unless we have in mind the ideas against which the idea of progress was a reaction. The people who were in favor of progress had some definite objective. They were opposed to the old attitude which we associate with Calvinism, but which existed even in large sections of the

Catholic Church, as well as in non-Christian groups. This was the view that human nature is profoundly and radically sinful and corrupt. Therefore human beings cannot be trusted to fulfill their natural inclination. Nature is sin. To indulge our natural impulses is sinful. That is an idea which is easily recognized; it has not yet died.

As a consequence of the idea that the human flesh is corrupt and our nature sinful, there was the necessity of relying upon authorities and magistrates, rules and blue laws. The excessive regulation of life by governments, such as we had in some of the Puritan colonies, was a natural consequence of that belief.

The belief in progress was a reaction against such a point of view. The believers in progress said: "No, human flesh is not originally corrupt. To be sure, man commits sins and crimes. You cannot deny that. But that is due to the bad institutions under which we live. If you could only wipe out the evil institutions under which man has lived, human nature would assert itself." This is the idea that underlies almost all of Shelley's writings—an idea that he got from Godwin.

There is something very beautiful and noble about that idea. There are, to my knowledge, few parallels in human history to the nobility of Condorcet in the shadow of the guillotine. He was hiding in a garret in Paris; his life was hanging on a thread; and yet he was writing a marvelously enthusiastic sketch of the progress of the human race, anticipating for the human race an indefinite advance towards perfection.

The only fit parallel that I can find to the nobility of that act is Socrates discussing the immortality of the soul, just before drinking the hemlock, or Jesus saying,

"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," during the crucifixion.

The idea of progress took root as a creed of hope and a fighting faith. In the course of time, however, progress came to be a shibboleth for a fatalistic optimism or meliorism. The notion that man inevitably progresses through the centuries came to claim the support of science under the name of evolution. But there is no evidence in science or history for the assumption that human nature is bound to become perfect as it develops in time.

There is no proof that human history is a simple straight line upward and onward, and there can be no such proof. For one thing, there are no clear meanings that can be assigned to the terms "upward" and "onward." Upward, of course, was a very definite idea under the old Ptolemaic astronomy. But under modern conditions one has to define "upward" with regard to standards. Unfortunately, people who talk glibly about progress and evolution generally have no very definite conception of any final goal or standard, or even of any definite direction.

Let us, however, go on to some of the more concrete expressions of this idea of progress. One of the ways in which the doctrine of progress is justified is by pointing to the history of mechanical inventions and to the growth of science. It is undoubtedly true that science has made rapid strides, but it is not true that all people today are more scientific than people were a hundred and fifty years ago, or three hundred years ago, or one thousand years ago: and on that point, I think, reflection will show that there is a very great deal of loose talk. Is it true, for instance, that a man who believes that the earth goes around the sun is more scientific than one who believes that the

## *The Future of American Liberalism*

sun goes around the earth? If he has no reason, I fail to see that one belief or the other is scientific. How many college graduates are there who can prove that the earth does go around the sun? Having taught college students for many years, I venture to say that there are no more than two in a hundred who can offer a logical proof. And any such proofs are bound to be inadequate. This can be affirmed without any hesitation because it is a matter of mathematical demonstration. Motion is relative, and therefore there can be inherently no such thing as proof of the fact that the earth goes around the sun. All you can prove is that a certain system of equations will explain planetary motions and other physical phenomena better than other systems do. And that, of course, is a matter that can be proved to all who know mathematics. Obviously that applies to a very small portion of the educated public.

For that matter, most of popular science is just a new form of superstition. What evidence is there that, because a man has read something about the romance of the atom, he really understands the world better; that he has attained a more scientific turn of mind? What evidence is there that because a man talks freely about psychology, or psychoanalysis and complexes and libidos and things of that sort, he really has scientific detachment and a sense of scientific evidence and scientific method? I should say that changes of lingo and various exercises of technical vocabulary do not indicate any growth of science—though the body of knowledge available today is larger than it was. People who want to use the material of science certainly have a better chance. But that does not mean that the great body of

people today are more scientific than they were before.

Belief in gradual and inevitable progress becomes more and more difficult to maintain, in the face of the carnage and destruction of two world wars and the failure of two victories to achieve the high objectives upon which so many wartime hopes were pinned. The kind of liberalism that was associated with this faith in progress through piecemeal cumulative reform has little appeal today and may well have less tomorrow. But is the liberal attitude necessarily dependent upon confidence in the inevitable success of our efforts? Many stout champions of the liberal cause have been frank to admit their inability to predict the future. Why can we not risk our lives in struggles of uncertain outcome? I am inclined to think that the faith in progress which is essential to the liberal attitude is not a faith in the inevitability of progress but rather a faith in its possibility.

That faith requires us to admit that we do not already possess the absolute truth. Such an admission runs counter to the religious, political, or economic convictions of many men and women. But it may be that the same catastrophes and failures which are destroying the faith in inevitable and gradual progress may also undermine the absolutisms that block the development of a liberalism fitted to the problems of our American future.

Today as in the time of Jesus those who seek the truth are the lovers of freedom. Conservatives and Communists generally do not seek the truth in social questions, because they already have it, or think they do. The peddlers of various brands of racial and national hatred do not seek the truth, because they fear it. Many more people do not seek the truth

## *Manifestoes for Tomorrow*

because they do not know how or lack the energy or time or skill demanded by the quest for knowledge. And, of course, there are many scholars and pedants who seek the truth only in narrower and narrower fields. But the man who can strive, with Ulysses, "to follow knowledge like a sinking star, beyond the utmost bound of human thought," who accepts no limitations on what he may study or question, to whom every endeavor of the human spirit is deserving of critical consideration, is the true liberal.

Liberalism can move forward, like science, because it embraces self-correcting principles which permit the correction of error and partial truth without an overthrow of the system that makes such correction possible. Like science, liberalism is based on the faith that other human beings can carry forward, by rational methods, the gains that we have won in human understanding. The faith of the liberal, as of the scientist, grows out of a deep humility which recognizes the limitations of mortal finitude and acknowledges the impossibility of any individual's attaining correct answers to all the problems that he faces. But this humility is combined with a hope that, through rational communication and collaboration among individuals, a living body of common thought may be created which will more adequately answer the problems of an age or society than can any individual, whether he be a scientist or a dictator. In the long run, liberal democracy may outlast any form of dictatorship because the strength of a liberal democracy is not bounded by the prowess of any one man or party. The strength of liberalism lies in the fact that it enables each of us to rise above the limitations of our hereditary class prejudices and to contribute toward a body of *ideas*

*and aspirations in action* that may incorporate more understanding than is vouchsafed to any single mortal. In the end, there is no way in which people can live together decently unless each individual or group realizes that the whole of truth and virtue is not exclusively in its possession. This is a hard lesson to learn, but without it there can be no humane civilization.

Let us take the other great belief of liberalism: the belief in tolerance. This is very closely connected with scientific method. Unless one has a certain amount of skepticism in one's system, one cannot possibly believe in tolerance. What does tolerance mean? Tolerance means that we shall give our enemies a chance. If we are secure and we know that our enemies cannot hurt us, we may be willing to give them a chance. But suppose that we believe in a certain sacred truth—say the truth of the Messiah, or the truth of a certain economic order, or the truth of certain constitutional doctrines—and some scalawag preaches that these are not true. Shall we be tolerant to untruth? That seems to me to be the crux of the whole question of liberalism. The true liberal has a certain amount of skepticism. The true liberal, being impressed with scientific method, says: "Certainly we should, for, although I am convinced that what I believe to be the truth is the truth, the other man may have something to say which I haven't heard yet, or the other man may have a point of view which is worth investigating. On the whole, in the conflict of opinions, more truth will thus come out than if there is suppression."

This attitude involves a number of things which are generally not recognized. It involves not only a certain amount of skepticism in our own fundamental conviction, but a certain amount of detach-

## *The Future of American Liberalism*

ment which very few people have. It is a rare gift to be able to be tolerant in that sense, because if we are pressed, if the enemy has the sword at our throats, we are not tempted to play fair and play according to the rules. We will do anything in our power to kill our assailant—or, at any rate, to get the sword away. And in general, people are not tolerant under stress, in periods of great passion, in periods of compulsion. Tolerance is a virtue that seems to thrive only in a certain leisure, in a certain cultivation. The people who show it best are the philosophers, because they thrive on diversity; or scientists, who also thrive upon the skepticism that is inherent in scientific method: "Come on with your doubts, everybody; the more the merrier." The scientific method is largely a method that consists in the development of the consequences of different hypotheses. It seems self-evident that from a point outside of a straight line only one parallel can be drawn. Along comes the Russian, Lobachevsky, and says: "I can conceive a point outside of a straight line through which more than one parallel can be drawn." Or the German, Riemann, who says: "No such line can be drawn through any point."

What is the attitude of the scientist? His business is primarily to develop the consequences of every one of these possible hypotheses. It is only because of that, because he is interested first of all in the play of ideas according to the rules of the game, that he can afford to be tolerant—to be hospitable to all sorts of denials and doubts.

In matters of religion we cannot so easily be tolerant. Suppose I know on the authority of the Koran that certain things are true, and somebody comes along and doubts it. I cannot listen to his doubts forever. Heretics generally talk too much

anyway. The most important thing is that the true faith shall be maintained. Tolerance appears to be a sin under those conditions.

So it is with other matters of great importance, e.g., economic interest. Where the pressure is strong upon us, tolerance is not an easy thing to practice. And so what you have is that, in the course of various civilizations which have appeared in history, the fine flower of tolerance has appeared only rarely, and I do not think it is likely ever to become a permanent acquisition of human nature. Tolerance is the result of unusually favorable circumstances and training. Where a man can afford to care more for the rules of the game than for any particular result, he can be tolerant. The chivalrous knight and the genuine scientist show how this attitude is conditioned.

Can such a thing become universal? I do not think so. Consider, for example, the scientists as a body of citizens. Could it be said, for instance, that a group of scientists are politically more liberal than other men? I think on the whole they divide like the rest of us. Are the scientists as a body more liberal on the subject of religion? Perhaps a little, but not very much. After all, even a scientist devoted to the search for truth is tolerant only in those particular scientific lines in which he happens to be an expert. He knows the difficulty of being certain about the complex facts he has studied, and therefore he has a certain amount of skepticism; but outside of his own field he is as dogmatic as anybody else, because he is likely to know as little.

So it seems to me that since a generous stock of ignorance is one of the fundamental equipments with which the Creator has endowed all human beings, toler-

ance will always be a very rare phenomenon. Therefore, a civilization that depends upon tolerance is always in a very precarious condition. It may thrive for a hundred years or more, but it is inherently frail like the bloom of a flower.

The enemy of tolerance is fanaticism, the opposite of liberalism. The root of fanaticism is impatience with contradiction, and that impatience goes very deep into the roots of human nature. Watch boys in New York, for instance, on the 16th of September and their attitude towards the man who persists in wearing a straw hat. Or suppose somebody were to appear in the streets of Washington wearing clothes such as respectable senators wore in ancient Rome: irritation would soon express itself. It is to be seen when somebody pronounces words in an unaccustomed way. In our elemental reactions we are irritated by the unfamiliar, the uncouth, the unknown. We do not feel at home and are thrown out of gear by departures from the usual order of things. Such irritations may accumulate and lead to an explosion, especially if someone comes along and capitalizes—or certain widespread experiences capitalize—them.

Once, as I was sitting in a car, a young man back of me—a very tall and handsome man—was talking to a girl, and he was complaining very bitterly that there was no chance for anybody who was not a Jew to get along in New York City. I sympathized with him very much because he really felt deeply distressed. He had to explain to this lady why he was not so successful as she would like him to be. Here was an occasion in which all the irritations of his daily life were capitalized and accumulated, and the explosion was noticeable and voluminous. This

seems to me to be the kind of stuff out of which race or group conflicts are made. Such irritations become organized as economic conflict, or religious conflict, or something of that sort. They form the substance which explodes if some one issue arises to touch off the fuse.

That is, in general, why I believe that civilization of the type that I have called liberal has no assurance of survival.

Human history shows the precariousness of liberal civilization. As the curtain of human history rises, we see at first Oriental monarchies. What is the typical way in which these Oriental monarchies show themselves? Consider their wisdom. Its essence is conformity. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and, alas, also the end. Fear and conformity are therefore the dominant rules. Morality consists in obedience to the law of God, and this is generally identical with the customary. We see this in the picture of Egyptian life. Everything is fixed—art, morals, and all human activities follow a fixed pattern. Everything has a fixed place, and to depart from it is to venture into the unknown, the strange and the unfamiliar, the uncouth. In contrast with this is the typical view of the Greeks, which begins with the adventures of the Argonauts, subsequently typified by Ulysses, whose venture beyond the Pillars of Hercules is characteristically condemned by Dante, who puts him in Hell for venturing beyond prescribed bounds.

The Greek invention or discovery of mathematics is perhaps the most characteristic expression of the free mind. Nothing is left to authority, to mere belief. Every proposition is freely questioned until we come to propositions that no one can question. And this free inquiry is extended to religion, morals, and politics.

## *The Future of American Liberalism*

We see this spirit manifested by the Ionian philosophers Thales and Pythagoras as early as the sixth century B.C. These men followed in the wake of Greek merchant adventurers. Thales and Pythagoras seem themselves to have been extensive travelers, and these travels seem to have disintegrated accepted traditional ideas and made free inquiry possible. This freedom puzzled the wise men of Egypt, who remarked to Herodotus, "You Greeks are children." And indeed the Greeks were, like children, free inquirers, until the growth of dogma produced the effects of dogmatic education. The best example of this spirit of free inquiry is perhaps Xenophanes, a wandering bard who observes that Ethiopians make their gods with snub noses and kinky hair, while the Thracians make theirs with blue eyes and flaxen hair, from which he concludes that if oxen made gods they would make them in the shape of oxen. This is an idea that would not occur to anyone living in a fixed community of agricultural piety.

We see this spirit in the teaching of philosophy by dialogue. Socrates proves propositions to a slave boy not by telling him on the authority of his own wisdom but by showing him that this truth is obtainable by clear thinking. This spirit of free inquiry led to the humanizing of religion—e.g., the gradual elimination of human sacrifice among the Greeks. It led to the liberation of medicine, the substitution of free inquiry into natural causes of disease, leaving the gods out of account. Thus priestly magic was rendered unnecessary for cures. In the political life it means democracy opposed to the divine right of kings or hereditary aristocracy. Perhaps the simplest outer expression of this is the fact that the Greeks were the first to introduce town planning. Cities

were to be built on a rational plan instead of being allowed to grow in helter-skelter fashion as is the case with all Oriental cities. Perhaps the most characteristic expression of this, however, is to be found in the Greek conception of ethics. The conduct of life is to be regulated not by taboos, or traditional superstition, or any arbitrary prohibitions. Life is to be regulated by considerations of wisdom. Man can plan his life within certain limits of nature, and when nature makes of life a smoky room, he may leave. We do not, therefore, have to be slaves if we are intelligent. Even in the decline of the Greek tradition the philosopher Plotinus can still contrast the life of reason with the life governed by belief in magic.

Now, it is well to note that the liberalism of the Greeks depended in a certain sense upon what we may perhaps call imperialism. The Greek philosophers from Thales and Herodotus were travelers. The safety of their travel depended on the peace preserved by the Persian Empire, which found its successors in the Macedonian and the Roman Empires. Freedom of motion depends on established roads that are well policed. The fitful tides of human life need channels. Greek civilization was liberal because it had the spirit of adventure, and this spirit of adventure is in one sense a harmony, or at any rate a balance, between caution and heedlessness.

Life brings illusion. Many of the new ideas that occur to us must be faulty and contradict each other. Hence the notion that mere change or mere novelty is the root of truth cannot be maintained.

The Greeks developed the scientific spirit because they struck the happy medium between fear and the spirit of adventure, carrying the latter into the intellec-



tual realm. But when they conquered the Near East, the Oriental attitude diluted the Hellenic elements. I do not say the latter died, because in certain corners, in certain unforeseen places, it persisted in some way or other in a shell—until it blossomed out in the form of the Arabic civilization, which during the ninth and tenth centuries contained certain elements of liberalism. There again you had a certain glorious opportunity, because of favorable historical conditions. That is the course of civilization. It blossoms out, dies down, and then blossoms out again.

The revival of learning opens a new era—the Renaissance, which restores man to his natural place and turns its back upon the old formula that nature is sin and intellect the devil.

We have elements of liberal civilization in the Italian city-states of the later Middle Ages and early Renaissance. There we see again this balance between conformity and the spirit of adventure. It begins with the Crusades; it is typified by such adventurers as Marco Polo and the pioneers of modern science. It is curious that most of the great predecessors of Newton in laying the foundations of modern science were connected with Padua. This was the university of Venice, and the Venetians used to say, "We are first Venetians and then Christians." They resisted the authority of the Pope. It was not profitable for Venetian trade to exclude Turks, Greek Orthodox, or Protestants from its university town. Thus trade leads to a liberal attitude toward students of the different nations, and thus you have within Padua the free development which we call modern science. Padua declines when Venetian trade declines.

Similar remarks can be made about the great Dutch universities which served as

models for the liberally inclined universities of other European countries at the end of the seventeenth and the early part of the eighteenth century.

The disintegration of traditional restraints upon human thought and energy has generally been the effect of commercial contact between different peoples. Today, however, the conditions that made commerce such a liberalizing influence in the past no longer operate so forcefully. In the first place, modern machinery and the easy means of travel and communication have reduced the diversity of life in different countries—and ideas, like clothes, are almost everywhere of the same pattern. The American who actually travels to Europe sees little more than the one who stays at home. While free thought is still of some advantage to commerce—to the extent that scientific discoveries may increase the volume and value of goods produced and exchanged—the commercial interests are more concerned to defend private property against all thought which may seriously modify it. Romantic nationalism in the economic field, of the type represented in economics by Fichte, Gentz, Adam Miller, and List, has become dominant, and our commercial classes are more fearful of internal insecurity than of the loss of international trade.

If commerce can no longer guarantee free trade in ideas, can we perhaps find guarantees for the future of liberalism in the forms of democracy? It is generally assumed that democracies are necessarily liberal. But while liberalism does tend to promote democracy—it has certainly been responsible for the extension of the suffrage and of the opportunities for education—democracies are not always liberal.

Rather obvious reasons for this are the intellectual and material conditions which

## *The Future of American Liberalism*

democracies breed. Our own democracy has been liberal in supporting our school system, and our Western states have been generous in supporting state universities; but it is well to inquire whether we really want our children to learn new ideas. While democracies are always ready to follow leaders, these leaders are seldom intellectuals or men who demand intellectual discipline on the part of their followers. King Demos wants to be flattered rather than intellectually trained, and it is easier to gratify the former want than the latter. I think it was King Ptolemy who asked to have geometry made easier for him. His geometry teacher, who happened to be a genuine Greek, said, "There is no royal road to geometry." But there are not many such Greeks living today. When King Demos says, "I want an easy way to the quantum theory, or to Einstein's relativity theory," hundreds of popular accounts are written, which do not really help King Demos to get very far along these roads. How much nonsense is written about evolution! Of course everybody believes in it. But ask your neighbor what it is that he believes and what the evidence for it is. You will then find that what most people believe and most of what is written about evolution is just arrant nonsense. In the hands of some of the high priests of science—of men like Osborne, Conklin, and others of that type—it is just Christian theology translated into scientific lingo. Experimental biology does not really use the concept of evolution, because it is too speculative and too vague. But popular audiences are not interested in such critical reflection. They crave something consoling.

What is the demand for something constructive? It is, after all, a demand for some symbol to which we can cling, some

picture that will make things easier and rosier. Now, most of us have other things to do besides studying science. Most people have certain work to achieve, and the amount of time and energy they can give to popular science is limited. Hence the important thing is that the author should be able to sell rather than know his subject.

Certainly, if people can be flattered into believing that they understand, they are not going to take the painful trouble of thinking. I do not say that aristocracies are superior in this respect, but they realize more readily the importance of training and discipline to keep themselves in power.

I have already alluded to the importance of a certain amount of material comfort and leisure as a condition of liberal civilization. But when the hunt for material things becomes excessive, you have what has been called barbarism rather than liberalism. That is to say, you have an absorption in material things which prevents the development of free personality. Attention to inner needs and inner judgments is necessary for the kind of detachment and degree of aloofness which a liberally civilized life demands. And in this respect democracies are not always favorable. In a democracy, where there are no impassable class divisions, most people want to appear wealthier than they are. For where the basis of distinction is only the attainment of wealth, everybody tries to appear on a level higher than his own. And this tends to increase the desire for material accumulation and expenditure for display rather than for the satisfaction of more substantial needs.

Under an aristocracy this does not happen, since it is just as unseemly for the commoner to act like an aristocrat as for

the aristocrat to act like a commoner. Where class lines are sharp, morality consists in conformity to class mores.

There is one other element that ought to be mentioned in this connection: the element of stimulation. Every human being, of course, needs some stimulation, and for a good deal of it we are dependent on others. We need a certain amount of sociability. Nevertheless too much sociability is inimical to thought. Men may act in crowds, or run in crowds, but they do not think in crowds. There is a certain distraction which comes from excessive sociability and too much absorption in practical activity, which is the death of thought, and with it necessarily the death of a liberal attitude. We may view this from the purely physical side. Thought requires a certain energy. That energy is not generally available when our organism is responding to a large number of small stimuli all the time. The tendency of modern civilization is to stimulate the organism constantly with all sorts of sounds, motions, or colors. A man goes out to the country away from the hurry and bustle of the city and from its bewildering sights and motions, and he feels a great relief. A great deal has been written about sex stimulation producing nervous strain. But the more ordinary stimulus of cupidity—the excitement of seeing other people becoming wealthy, and trying to imitate them—is a constant factor of no less importance in preventing us from having any leisure for quiet reflection. And whatever militates against free thought is profoundly inimical to the continuity of a liberal civilization.

IV

The difficulties that stand in the path of American liberalism today are many and

various, and the charting of them is a hazardous task. But against the background of history four special dangers cast foreboding shadows. First of these is the shadow of militarism. Our traditional American liberalism was closely associated with the fact that we had no large standing army, no peacetime conscription, and even no wartime conscription in our earliest struggles to win and maintain independence. Along with our dislike of military regimentation there grew up a certain glorification of personal freedom, free economic enterprise, freedom to believe in and preach unorthodox views, and a general irreverence towards the authority of parents, policemen, legislatures, and other traditional repositories of wisdom and power. All this is somewhat shocking to foreign visitors, but it has certainly played its part in the development of modern invention, which is stimulated by disrespect for authority, and in the advancing living standards which are so largely based on advances in technology and economic enterprises. This disrespect for authority has also stimulated our national intellectual life; and, while much of the result is shoddy, there are fields, such as anthropology, jurisprudence, and formal logic, where in recent years the lead in world scholarship has passed to the United States. But disrespect for authority is the one thing that the military mind cannot permit. And it is natural that a generation that has gone through many years of warfare in which the survival of freedom was thought to be at stake should develop a great respect for the military virtues and the military system. The imitation that arises out of conflict is one of the most potent forms of conversion, and it is only natural that constant comparison of our efficacy in warfare with the efficacy of our

## *The Future of American Liberalism*

enemies should lead to the adoption of the things that made our enemies powerful and incidentally of the things that made them our enemies. As an old Chinese proverb has it, the first result of any war is that the adversaries exchange vices. And just as the Axis powers have taken over some of the worst features of American mass-production and advertising, so the danger is that we shall copy the militarism that corrupted Germany and Japan.

Only less important than the influence of our enemies is that of our allies. If we are to co-operate with other militarized nations, it will be very easy for us to slip into their way of action. Either that, or we shall have to persuade our allies and associates to adopt our ways of acting—which will require a faith in democracy that is very rare.

Alongside the danger of militarization looms the danger that the growth of governmental power may lead to an American form of dictatorship. The opposition to governmental power which was once so strong a part of Jeffersonian democracy is increasingly rare, except among malefactors of great wealth who would like to exercise their own forms of dictatorship. The tradition of keeping governmental powers weak and widely diffused has given way to the glorification of efficiency. From the standpoint of efficiency, government should be centralized and all checks and balances are as unnecessary as they would be in a corporate board of directors. Whether enough vitality remains in the traditional Jeffersonian democracy to check the growth of executive government and to bring about a revival of federalism and the diffusion of governmental powers remains a serious question.

The prospect of increased concentration of economic sovereignty in corporate direc-

tors is as large a danger as the prospect of political dictatorship. Indeed the differences between the two prospects are relatively unimportant. Government is no less dictatorial because its orders are sealed with the dollar sign rather than with the national emblem. It may be that old-fashioned liberals of the Brandeis school are right in thinking that the interests of efficiency will curtail the growth of economic power before it endangers our liberties. But I think liberals stand on firmer ground when they insist that economic efficiency must give way to other intangible values when the accumulation of wealth threatens the decay of men.

Finally there looms the danger that our natural disposition to look on the world as a fight between pure light and utter darkness will be so intensified by the experiences of war that men will tumble wholesale into the folds of those faiths that purport to have the answers to all problems, and that in the warfare between these faiths, or in their union and alliance, the voice of liberalism will be drowned out.

Can America realize the liberal vision that dogged its youth, now in the days of its maturity and power? None of us knows the answer to that question. Perhaps it is enough that each of us who holds to the liberal faith shall, in his own way, give his strength to the defense of the ancient and ever new ideal of liberal civilization.

v

The hasty conclusion that liberalism is dead has been given currency by the passionate and uncompromisingly ruthless war spirit, common to Communists and Fascists. But I do not believe that liberalism is dead, or that it has outlived its day. There still seems to me enough human

## *Manifestoes for Tomorrow*

reason left to which to appeal against reckless fanaticism.

Fanaticism is prone to belittle the gains that have come to mankind from the spirit of free inquiry, free discussion, and rational accommodation. So long as human beings lack omniscience, society can only suffer serious loss when one group suppresses the opinions and criticisms of all others. Liberalism, conceived as the spirit of free inquiry, free discussion, and rational accommodation, can continue to appeal to the conscience of men as long as the world offers visible proofs of the blindness of all illiberal power philosophies.

Liberalism, so conceived, may take forms very different from those with which the word has been traditionally associated in the popular mind. Traditionally, liberalism has been conceived as a form of individualism. Liberalism in economics has been associated with opposition to collective controls over production and distribution. In politics liberalism has been historically associated with the supremacy of individual rights. Neither of these beliefs has a very bright future.

Just now individualism is admittedly bankrupt throughout the world in the industrial field. In this country we have no national plan to overcome the obvious and simple stupidity of a system that periodically has too much food on the one hand, and want, bordering on starvation, on the other, without being able to bring the food from those who wish to sell it to those who need it. The economics of individualism, with its assumption of pre-established harmony, is as intellectually discredited as the belief in witchcraft.

Thoughtful people today can no longer hope for salvation through economic warfare and anarchy. There is a general consensus that some social plan of production

for the needs of a community, rather than for individual profit, is necessary if the routine of civilized life is to continue. The real question is: Shall the planning be done by some irresponsible dictatorship, or by democratic representatives whose acts are subject to discussion and criticism?

My own belief is that increased governmental participation in our economic life is desirable and necessary if we are to avoid the greater evils of economic anarchy and corporate despotism. And such an approach to the problem of economic controls can be made entirely within the framework of liberalism. I do not challenge the right of those who oppose this tendency to invoke the name of liberalism. Liberals may disagree with each other on all kinds of vital issues. But if liberal individualists and liberal collectivists disagree with each other they do not need to resort to guns to settle their differences. Like scientists they can argue and exchange evidence and arrange crucial experiments; and, though these methods cannot be relied upon to produce immediate unanimity on all issues, they do, in the long run, bring substantial agreement on most issues which have been examined in a scientific spirit over a considerable period. And the problems that have been thus solved, whether in the field of mathematics or in the field of penology, are more likely to stay solved than those settled by guns.

Liberalism cannot be confined to individualistic doctrines in the field of politics any more than in the field of economics. The classical defense of human freedom in terms of the inherent rights of the individual gave us, in earlier days, our bills of rights, which are the best monuments of liberal individualism. But the idea of the superiority of the individual to society

## *The Future of American Liberalism*

came in later years to serve as the stock justification for all sorts of immoral and unsocial activities on the part of privileged groups and vested interests. Thus today a philosophy of liberalism that minimizes the social interest in individual conduct, particularly in economic fields, may appeal to conservatives and reactionaries but will hardly serve as a weapon of democracy. But, though liberalism in modern times is deeply rooted in the philosophy of individualism, the essentials of the liberal attitude are entirely compatible with a belief that the growing interdependence of men in an industrial age calls for an increasing scope of governmental activity in fields once left to private charity and private initiative. The defense of free speech can be more effectively waged today in terms of the social importance of full exploration and exposition of alternative views than in terms of the sanctity of individual error. Just as mathematics proceeds by tracing the consequences of erroneous views, so public enlightenment must proceed by the analyzing and debating of false and threatening opinions. From the standpoint of society, it is essential that misguided individuals have every opportunity to develop in discourse the consequences of their errors, though the safety of society may require that such individuals be locked up when they begin to put into practice ideas that violate human decency.

The defense of individual liberty in these social terms may carry greater weight than either the appeal to "natural rights" or the argument that suppression is self-defeating. History gives little support to the doctrine that suppression is always ineffective. Of course, all human arrangements succumb to the attrition of time. But, taken over a limited period, which is generally

as far as human prevision can go, suppression has often achieved its goal. Paganism was suppressed in Christian lands, and so were various forms of heresy. Spain got rid of Protestants as well as of Jews and Moors, and France achieved unity by suppressing the Huguenots. The ruthless eradication of the Paris Communards by the Versailles troops of Thiers, of the Socialists in Finland by the counterrevolutionaries, and of all liberal and dissident parties by the Bolshevik, Fascist, and Nazi governments, are a few of the examples that can be cited of the successful achievement of unity by deliberate and systematic suppression.

The real evil of suppression is not that it is ineffective but that it deprives the society that practices it of the opportunity to enlarge its vision of the good life and to realize its best potentialities through processes of peaceful change.

The importance of encouraging rather than suppressing diversity extends beyond the realm of discourse. All fields of life are impoverished by the monistic mania for uniformity which serves as the background for the ridicule and persecution of that which is peculiar.

A narrow conception of integration is illustrated in the conception of Americanization as the utter abandonment of any loyalty to foreign cultural traditions on the part of the foreign-born. Those who preach this do not realize how it would impoverish America if our immigrants did not contribute from their own tradition to the common stock of American civilization. Our political parties seeking to attract the votes of the foreign-born do much more to Americanize them by giving their representatives a place in our political life. There is little reason to believe that all abilities

## *Manifestoes for Tomorrow*

are homogeneously distributed in the different groups. On the contrary, there is a good deal of evidence to indicate that, for historical reasons, certain nationality groups send more than their proportionate share of able men into the maritime occupations, others into the civil service and engineering fields, others into the police and fire departments of our larger municipalities, and others into law and medicine. To ignore this and restrict any group to any fixed quota is thus to deprive the community of the best obtainable service.

The concept of federalism still has an important role to play in national as well as international affairs, and in cultural as well as political activities. The unity that a great society requires is the unity of a symphony or a drama, not the unity of a monotone or of a vaudeville actor who endlessly repeats the same good or bad joke.

There remains the inevitable question: Is it worth while to try to perpetuate liberal civilization? Perhaps most people, if pressed to state their real attitude, would say it is not. For liberal civilization, after all, is based upon (or can be expressed in) the Greek motto: "What is important is not life, but the good life." Many of our current opinions seem to me to be contrary to that. They seem to assume that life as such is more important than the good life. That seems to me the real issue, and one of the most fundamental issues we can face. The reasons that lead the Catholic Church to condemn birth-control; the reasons that make so many lovely, sentimental people condemn the death penalty for criminals—all these reasons seem to me to go upon the assumption that life as such is sacred, and the human beings must not lay their hands upon the gates of life and death. If you really believe that, then the question of

liberalism is a minor matter. The important thing is: "Keep your hands off from the gates of life and death."

The real liberal takes a very different attitude. He believes that life is important only as the condition or opportunity for the good life, and prefers not to live at all if he must live as a slave or in degradation.

History has no end, and I do not pretend to be able to predict the future. But I do think it worth while to reiterate my general disbelief in the doctrine that history is just one continuous line of progress onward and upward; or even in the more ancient view of Aristotle, the Hindus, Vico, and Nietzsche, that history is a series of repeatable cycles. I accept neither of these views because I do not believe history is as simple as that. In fact, I do not believe that if we take the whole complex of history we can form any adequate symbol for it. What we can do is to consider certain phases of it.

Suppose we stood outside of the earth and actually saw its motion. It would appear even more irregular than that of the other planets. We obtain some clarity by decomposing the concrete reality into elements. So it is, I think, with regard to history. We have to decompose the various elements which enter into history, and trace each one of them separately. When we do that it seems to me that we have to fall back upon a general view which may be called the polarity of nature, i.e., the two-sidedness of things. In the physical realm there is always action and reaction. There is no one force acting, but always many forces acting in opposite directions. So, in life, there is growth and decay. In human history there are ups and downs. There are periods of flowering and periods

## *Modern Man Is Obsolete*

of decay. There is no use, it seems to me, in thinking that any one movement of history, or of human life, will continue forever.

So I come back to the notion of Goethe—that if you could say to one moment, "O stay, thou art so fair," that would be the end.

## MODERN MAN IS OBSOLETE

by NORMAN COUSINS

WHATEVER ELATION there is in the world today because of final victory in the war is severely tempered by fear. It is a primitive fear, the fear of the unknown, the fear of forces man can neither channel nor comprehend. This fear is not new; in its classical form it is the fear of irrational death. But overnight it has become intensified, magnified. It has burst out of the subconscious and into the conscious, filling the mind with primordial apprehensions. It is thus that man stumbles fitfully into a new age of atomic energy for which he is as ill equipped to accept its potential blessings as he is to counteract or control its present dangers.

Where man can find no answer, he will find fear. While the dust was still settling over Hiroshima, he was asking himself questions and finding no answers. The biggest question of these concerns the nature of man. Is war in the nature of man? If so, how much time has he left before he employs the means he has already devised for the ultimate in self-destruction—extinction? And now that the science of warfare has reached the point where it threatens the planet itself, is it possible that man is destined to return the earth to its aboriginal incandescent mass blazing at fifty million degrees? If not—that is, if war is

not in the nature of man—then how is he to interpret his own experience, which tells him that in all of recorded history there have been only 300 years in the aggregate during which he has been free of war?

Closely following upon these are other questions, flowing out endlessly from his fears and without prospect of definitive answer. Even assuming that he could hold destructive science in check, what changes would the new age bring or demand in his everyday life? What changes would it bring or demand in his culture, his education, his philosophy, his religion, his relationships with other human beings?

In speculating upon these questions, it should not be necessary to prove that on August 6, 1945, a new age was born. When on that day a parachute containing a small object floated to earth over Japan, it marked the violent death of one stage in man's history and the beginning of another. Nor should it be necessary to prove the saturating effect of the new age, permeating every aspect of man's activities, from machines to morals, from physics to philosophy, from politics to poetry; in sum, it is an effect creating a blanket of obsolescence not only over the methods and the products of man but over man himself.

It is a curious phenomenon of nature

"Modern Man Is Obsolete," by Norman Cousins, originally appeared as an editorial in *The Saturday Review of Literature*, August 18, 1945, and was later published in expanded, book form by The Viking Press, New York.



## *Manifestoes for Tomorrow*

that only two species practice the art of war—men and ants, both of which, ironically, maintain complex social organizations. This does not mean that only men and ants engage in the murder of their own kind. Many animals of the same species kill each other, but only men and ants have practiced the science of organized destruction, employing their massed numbers in violent combat and relying on strategy and tactics to meet developing situations or to capitalize on the weaknesses in the strategy and tactics of the other side. The longest continuous war ever fought between men lasted thirty years. The longest ant war ever recorded last six-and-a-half weeks, or whatever the corresponding units would be in ant reckoning.

It is encouraging to note that while all entomologists are agreed that war is instinctive with ants, not all anthropologists and biologists are agreed that war is instinctive with men. The strict empiricists, of course, find everything in man's history to indicate that war is locked up with his nature. But a broader and more generous, certainly more philosophical, view is held by those scientists who claim that the evidence to date is incomplete and misleading, and that man *does* have within him the power of abolishing war. Prominent among these is Julian Huxley, who draws a sharp distinction between human nature and the *expression* of human nature. Thus war is not a reflection but an expression of his nature. Moreover, the expression may change, as the factors which lead to war may change. "In man, as in ants, war in any serious sense is bound up with the existence of accumulations of property to fight about. . . . As for human nature, it contains no specific war instinct, as does the nature of harvester ants. There is in man's makeup a general aggressive tendency, but

this, like all other human urges, is not a specific and unvarying instinct; it can be molded into the most varied forms."

But even if this gives us a reassuring answer to the question—is war inevitable because of man's nature?—it still leaves unanswered the question concerning the causes leading up to war. The expression of man's nature will continue to be warlike if the same conditions are continued that have provoked warlike expressions in him in the past. And since man's survival on earth is now absolutely dependent on his ability to avoid a new war, he is faced with the so-far insoluble problem of eliminating those causes.

In the most primitive sense, war in man is an expression of his competitive impulses. Like everything else in nature, he has had to fight for existence; but the battle against other animals, once won, gave way in his evolution to battle against his own kind. Darwin called it the survival of the fittest, and its most overstretched interpretation is to be found in "Mein Kampf," with its naked glorification of brute force and the complete worship of might makes right. In the political and national sense, it has been the attempt of the "have-nots" to take from the "haves," or the attempt of the "haves" to add further to their lot at the expense of the "have-nots." Not always was property at stake; comparative advantages were measured in terms of power, and in terms of tribal or national superiority. The good luck of one nation became the hard luck of another. The good fortune of the Western powers in obtaining "concessions" in China at the turn of the century was the ill fortune of the Chinese. The power that Germany stripped from Austria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, and France at the beginning of World War II she added to her own.

## Modern Man Is Obsolete

What does it matter, then, if war is not in the nature of man so long as man continues through the expression of his nature to be a viciously competitive animal? The effect is the same, and therefore the result must be as conclusive—war being the effect, and complete obliteration of the human species being the result.

If this reasoning is correct, then modern man is obsolete, a self-made anachronism becoming more incongruous by the minute. He has exalted change in everything but himself. He has leaped centuries ahead in inventing a new world to live in, but he knows little or nothing about his own part in that world. He has surrounded and confounded himself with gaps—gaps between revolutionary science and evolutionary anthropology, between cosmic gadgets and human wisdom, between intellect and conscience. The struggle between science and morals that Henry Thomas Buckle foresaw a century ago has been all but won by science. Given time, man might be expected to bridge those gaps normally; but by his own hand, he is destroying even time. Communication, transportation, war no longer wait on time. Decision and execution in the modern world are becoming virtually synchronous. Thus, whatever bridges man has to build and cross he shall have to build and cross immediately.

This involves both biology and will. If he lacks the actual and potential biological equipment to build those bridges, then the birth certificate of the atomic age is in reality a *memento mori*. But even if he possesses the necessary biological equipment, he must still make the decision which says that he is to apply himself to the challenge. Capability without decision is inaction and inconsequence.

Man is left, then, with a crisis in decision. The main test before him involves

his will to change rather than his ability to change. That he is capable of change is certain. For there is no more mutable or adaptable animal in the world. We have seen him migrate from one extreme clime to another. We have seen him step out of backward societies and join advanced groups. We have seen, within the space of a single generation, tribes of headhunters spurn their acephalous pastimes and rituals and become purveyors of the Western arts. This is not to imply that the change was necessarily for the better; only that change was possible. Changeability with the headhunters proceeded from external pressure and fear of punishment, true, and was only secondarily a matter of voluntary decision. But the stimulus was there; and mankind today need look no further for stimulus than its own desire to stay alive. The critical power of change, says Spengler, is directly linked to the survival drive. Once the instinct for survival is stimulated, the basic condition for change can be met.

That is why the quintessence of destruction as potentially represented by modern science must be dramatized and kept in the forefront of public opinion. The full dimensions of the peril must be seen and recognized. Then and only then will man realize that the first order of business is the question of continued existence. Then and only then will he be prepared to make the decisions necessary to assure that survival.

In making these decisions, there are two principal courses that are open to him. Both will keep him alive for an indefinite or at least a reasonably long period. These courses, however, are directly contradictory and represent polar extremes of approach.

The first course is the positive approach. It begins with a careful survey and ap-

praisal of the obsolescences which constitute the afterbirth of the new age. The survey must begin with man himself. "The proper study of Mankind is Man," said Pope. No amount of tinkering with his institutions will be sufficient to insure his survival unless he can make the necessary adjustments in his own relationship to the world and to society.

The first adjustment or mutation needed in the expression of his nature, to use Huxley's words, is his savagely competitive impulses. In the pre-Atomic Age, those impulses were natural and occasionally justifiable, though they often led to war. But the rise of materialistic man had reasons behind it and must be viewed against its natural setting. Lyell, Spencer, Darwin, Lamarck, Malthus, and others have concerned themselves with various aspects of this natural setting, but its dominant feature was an insufficiency of the goods and the needs of life. From Biblical history right up through the present, there was never time when starvation and economic suffering were not acute somewhere in the world.

This is only part of the story, of course, for it is dangerous to apply an economic interpretation indiscriminately to all history. Politics, religion, force for force's sake, jealousy, ambition, love of conquest, love of reform—all these and others have figured in the equations of history and war. But the economic factor was seldom if ever absent, even when it was not the prime mover. Populations frequently increased more rapidly than available land, goods, or wealth. Malthus believed that they increased so rapidly at times that war or plague became nature's safety valve. This interpretation has undergone some revision, but it is not the interpretation

but the circumstances that raises the problem.

Yet all this has been—or can be—changed by the new age. Man now has it within his grasp to emancipate himself economically. If he wills it, he is in a position to refine his competitive impulse; he can take the step from competitive man to co-operative man. He has at last unlocked enough of the earth's secrets to provide for his needs on a world scale. The same atomic and electrical energy that can destroy a city can also usher in an age of economic sufficiency. It need no longer be a question as to which peoples shall prosper and which shall be deprived. There is power enough and resources enough for all.

It is here that man's survey of himself needs the severest scrutiny, for he is his own greatest obstacle to the achievement of those attainable and necessary goals. While he is willing to mobilize all his scientific and intellectual energies for purposes of death, he is unwilling to undertake any comparable mobilization for purposes of life. He has shattered the atom and harnessed its fabulous power to a bomb, but he balks—or allows himself to be balked—when it comes to harnessing that power for human progress. Already, many representatives of industry have counseled words of synthetic caution, informing a puzzled public that we shall not see the practical application of atomic energy for general use in our lifetime. If it works out this way, it will not be because of any lack of knowledge or skill, but only because of the fear in certain quarters that atomic energy will mean a complete revamping of the economic structure, with the probability that it would be operated as a government utility or public service.

This is not a matter of urging a change

## *Modern Man Is Obsolete*

away from the present economic structure just for the sake of change; it is recognition of a hard new fact of life that has made that economic structure obsolete in an Atomic Age just as it has made practically all our other institutions obsolete.

The cry is certain to go up against further government experimentation with atomic energy for peacetime purposes, and industry will demand that government withdraw and give it the right to carry on its own experiments. These experiments, however, would most likely be no more consequential than the atomic bomb would have been if left to decentralized chance. Moreover, it takes enthusiasm to fertilize invention, and there is as yet little discernible enthusiasm for atomic energy in those quarters which are asking for the right to sponsor its peace-time uses. However understandable this lack of enthusiasm may be, it should not blind public opinion to the critical importance of having research for practical use carried on with the same urgency, the same fullness, the same scope and intensity as it has been for war ends thus far.

The size of the opportunity is exceeded only by the size of the promise. But even as man stands on the threshold of a new age, he is being pulled back by his coattails and told to look the other way, told that he must not allow his imagination to get out of hand—all this at a time when he should know almost instinctively that if he can put the same courage, daring, imagination, ingenuity, and skill that he demonstrated in winning the war into meeting the problems of the new age, he can win the peace as well.

He must believe, too, that mobilization of science and knowledge in peace should not be confined to cosmic forces, but must be extended to his other needs, principally

health. What a fantastic irony that organized science knows the secret of the atom but as yet knows not a fig about the common cold! Who can tell what advances in medical knowledge might accrue to the welfare of mankind if as much mobilized effort were put into the study of man as there has been of matter! Cancer, heart disease, nephritis, leukemia, encephalitis, poliomyelitis, arteriosclerosis, aplastic anemia—all these are anomalies in the modern world; there is no reason why mobilized research should not be directed at their causes and cure. Nor is there any reason why even old age should not be regarded as a disease to be attacked by science in the same intensive fashion.

Surveying other adjustments he shall have to make if he chooses the positive course, man must consider himself in relation to his individual development. He can have the limitless opportunities that can come with time to think. The trend during the last fifty years towards shorter work weeks and shorter hours will not only be continued but sharply accelerated. Not more than half of each week will be spent earning a living. But a revolution is needed in his leisure-time activities—which so far have come to be associated almost entirely with the commodities of vended amusement. Once before, the world knew a Golden Age where the development of the individual—his mind and his body—was considered the first law of life. In Greece, it took the form of the revolution of awareness, the emancipation of the intellect from the limitations of corroding ignorance and prejudice.

Once again, if man wills it, he can be in a position to restore that first law of life. But he shall have to effect a radical transformation in his approach to and philosophy of education, which must prepare

him for the opportunities and responsibilities not only of his chosen work but for the business of living itself. The primary aim should be the development of a critical intelligence. The futile war now going on between specialization and general study must be stopped. There need no longer be any conflict between the two. The individual will need both—specialization for the requirements of research, general knowledge for the requirements of living. As for the problem of time in which to accomplish these dual objectives, formalized education until the twenty-fifth or thirtieth year is doubtless indicated; but it should not abruptly end there. Education, like the capacity of the mind itself, has no rigid boundaries. Unlimited exploration should be the first imperative of any educational program.

We have saved for last the most crucial aspect of this general survey relating to the first course: the transformation or adjustment from national man to world man. Already he has become a world warrior; it is but one additional step—though a long one—for him to develop a world conscience. This is not vaporous idealism, but sheer driving necessity. It bears directly on the prospects of his own survival. He shall have to recognize the flat truth that the greatest obsolescence of all in the Atomic Age is national sovereignty. Even back in the old-fashioned rocket age before August 6, 1945, strict national sovereignty was an anomalous and preposterous hold-over from the tribal instinct in nations. If it was anomalous then, it is the quintessence of anomaly now. The world is a geographic entity. This is not only the basic requisite for world government but the basic reason behind the need. A common ground of destiny is not too large a site for the founding of any community.

Reject all other arguments for *real* world government—reject the economic, the ideological, the sociological, the humanitarian arguments, valid though they may be. Consider only the towering problem of policing the atom—the problem of keeping the smallest particle of matter from destroying all matter. We are building on soapbubbles if we expect this problem to be automatically solved by having America, Britain, and Canada keep the secret to themselves. That is not only highly improbable, but would in itself stimulate the other nations to undertake whatever additional research might be necessary over their present experimentation to yield the desired results. In all history, there is not a single instance of a new weapon being kept exclusively by any power or powers; sooner or later either the basic principles become generally known or parallel devices are invented. Before long, the atomic bomb will follow the jet plane, the rocket bomb, radar, and the flame thrower into general circulation. We must not forget that we were not the only horse in the atomic derby; we just happened to finish first. The others will be along in due time.

Nor can we rely on destructive atomic energy to take care of itself. Already there is the tempting but dangerous notion to the effect that the atomic bomb is so horrible and the terror of retaliation so great that we may have seen the last of war. This is quasi-logical, but war is no respecter of logic, relative or absolute. And if history teaches us anything, it is that the possibility of war increases in direct proportion to the effectiveness of the instruments of war.

Far from banishing war, the atomic bomb will in itself constitute a cause of war. In the absence of world control as part of world government, it will create

universal fear and suspicion. Each nation will live nervously from one moment to the next, not knowing whether the designs or ambitions of other nations might prompt them to attempt a lightning blow of obliteration. The ordinary, the inevitable differences among nations which might in themselves be susceptible of solution might now become the signals for direct action, lest the other nation get in the first and decisive blow. Since the science of warfare will no longer be dependent upon armies but will be waged by push-buttons, releasing radio-controlled rocket planes carrying cargoes of atomic explosives, the slightest suspicion may start all the push-buttons going.

There is the argument, of course, that each nation will realize this; that is, that the first button might lead to universal catastrophe as all the other nations rush to their switchboards of annihilation. Here, too, there is the unwarranted presupposition of reason. In an atmosphere of high tension and suspicion, reason is an easy victim. Moreover, there will always be the feeling that one nation can escape though all the others may go down. What a temptation for the blitzkriegers!

No; there is no comfort to be derived from the war-is-now-too-horrible theory. There is one way and only one to achieve effective control of destructive atomic energy and that is through centralized world government. Not loose, informal organization. Not even through an international pool, or through an international policing agreement. A police force is no better than its laws, and there can be no laws without government. Finally, the potency of the weapon must dictate the potency of its control.

There is no need to discuss the historical reasons pointing to and arguing for world

government. There is no need to talk of the difficulties in the way of world government. There is need only to ask whether we can afford to do without it. All other considerations become either secondary or inconsequential.

It would be comforting to know that the world had several generations in which it might be able to evolve naturally and progressively into a single governmental unit. In fact, even as late as August 5, 1945, it seemed that the Charter of the United Nations had made an adequate beginning in that direction, providing the machinery for revision which might lead within fifteen or twenty years to a real world structure. But the time factor has been shattered. We no longer have a leeway of fifteen or twenty years; whatever must be done must be done with an immediacy which is in keeping with the urgency. Once the basic peace settlements are arranged, the United Nations must convene again for an Atomic Age inventory, undertaking an overall examination of the revolutionary changes in the world since its conference in San Francisco in the long-ago spring of 1945.

If all this sounds like headlong argument, posing methods or solutions which seem above the reach of mortal man, the answer must be that mortal man's reach was long enough apparently to push science and invention ahead by at least five hundred years during five years of experimentation on atomic energy. His ability to do this not only indicates that he can extend or over-extend himself when pressed, but emphasizes the need to do the same with government.

In meeting this need, man need not be frightened by the enormity of the differences which shall have to be accommodated within the world structure. We can

## *Manifestoes for Tomorrow*

agree with Macneile Dixon in "The Human Situation," that "Many are the races and many the temperaments. There are vehement and hot-headed men, selfless and conciliatory men. They display, varying as they do in appearance, talents, behavior, every type of unpredictable reaction to their surroundings. There are sybarites and ascetics, dreamers and bustling active men of affairs, clever and stupid, worldly and religious, mockers and mystics, pugnacious, loyal, cunning, treacherous, cheerful and melancholy men. There are eagles among them, tigers, doves, and serpents. 'He was a comedian on the stage,' said the wife of a celebrated funny man, 'but a tragedian in the home.'" All these differences are in addition to those of ideology, politics, and geography.

And yet, it is not in spite of these variations but because of them that man is now in need of a general amalgam. If those variations did not exist, if man's actions were uniform and uniformly predictable, then man would be as free of war as the vegetable kingdom. The differences point up the problem, not the problem the differences. The important question is not how great an obstacle the differences may be to the setting up of a closely knit world structure, but whether man will be in a better position to reconcile those differences within world government than without it.

Man must decide, moreover, what is more important—his differences or his similarities. If he chooses the former, he embarks on a path that will, paradoxically, destroy the differences and himself as well. If he chooses the latter, he shows a willingness to meet the responsibilities that go with maturity and conscience. Though heterogeneity is the basic manifestation of nature, as Spencer observed, a still greater

manifestation is the ability of nature to create larger areas of homogeneity which act as a sort of rim to the spokes of the human wheel.

True, in making the jump to world government, man is taking a big chance. Not only does he have to create the first world authority, but he shall have to make sure that this authority is wisely used. The world institution must be compatible with—indeed, must promote—free institutions. This challenge is not less important than the challenge to establish world government itself, for all through history there has been too great a contradiction between ideals and institutions and the forces which have taken over those ideals and institutions. Another way of saying this is that we have too often allowed the best ideas to fall into the hands of the worst men. There has not been a great ideal or idea which has not been perverted or exploited at one time or another by those who were looking for means to an end—the end being seldom compatible with the idea itself. The greatest idea ever to be taken up by the mind of man—Christianity—was for centuries violated and corrupted by its very administrators. Alexander's vision of a brotherhood of man fell victim to its own force—force based on might makes right. Mohammed dreamed of a universal religion based on the noblest of ethics, and taught that conversion by the sword was no conversion at all; yet his followers built an empire largely at the point of the sword. Passing from religion to politics, we have only to consider the immediate past. It was in the name of socialism and social progress that Fascism came to Italy and Nazism to Germany.

That is the double nature of the challenge: to bring about world government

## *The Moralist in an Unbelieving World*

and to keep it pure. It is a large order, perhaps the largest order man has had to meet in his 50,000-odd years on earth, but he himself has set up the conditions which have made the order necessary.

All these are the various mutations and adjustments needed in the expression of man's nature, in his way of life, his thinking, his economics, his education, his conditioning and orientation, and his concept of government in an Atomic Age. But if he rejects this, the first course, there is yet another way, an alternative to world government. This is the second course. Preposterous as this second course may seem, we describe it in all seriousness, for it is possible that through it man may find a way to stay alive—which is the central problem under consideration in this paper.

The second course is relatively simple. It requires that man destroy, carefully and completely, everything relating to science

and civilization. Let him destroy all machines and the knowledge which can build or operate those machines. Let him raze his cities, smash his laboratories, dismantle his factories, tear down his universities and schools, burn his libraries, rip apart his art. Let him murder his scientists, his doctors, his teachers, his lawmakers, his mechanics, his merchants, and anyone who has anything to do with the machinery of knowledge or progress. Let him punish literacy by death. Let him abolish nations and set up the tribe as sovereign. In short, let him revert to his condition in society in 10,000 B.C. Thus emancipated from science, from progress, from government, from knowledge, from thought, he can be reasonably certain of safeguarding his existence on this planet.

This is the alternative to world government—if modern man wishes an alternative.

## THE MORALIST IN AN UNBELIEVING WORLD

by WALTER LIPPMANN

### *1. The Declaration of Ideals*

OF ALL THE BEWILDERMENTS of the present age none is greater than that of the conscientious and candid moralist himself. The very name of moralist seems to have become a term of disparagement and to suggest a somewhat pretentious and a somewhat stupid, perhaps even a somewhat hypocritical, meddler in other men's lives. In the minds of very many in the modern generation moralists are set down as persons who, in the words of Dean Inge, fancy

themselves attracted by God when they are really repelled by man.

The disesteem into which moralists have fallen is an historical accident. It so happens that those who administered the affairs of the established churches have, by and large, failed utterly to comprehend how deep and how inexorable was the dissolution of the ancestral order. They imagined either that this change in human affairs was a kind of temporary corruption, or that, like the eighty propositions listed in the Syllabus of Pope Pius IX, it could be

\*From *A Preface to Morals*, by Walter Lippmann. By permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers.



regarded as due to "errors" of the human mind. There were, of course, churchmen who knew better, but on the whole those who prevailed in the great ecclesiastical establishments could not believe that the skepticism of mind and the freedom of action which modern men exercise were due to inexorable historic causes. They declined to acknowledge that modern freedom was not merely a willful iconoclasm, but the liquidation of an older order of human life.

Because they could not comprehend the magnitude of the revolution in which they were involved, they set themselves the task of impeding its progress by chastising the rebels and refuting their rationalizations. This was described as a vindication of morals. The effect was to associate morality with the vindication of the habits and dispositions of those who were most thoroughly out of sympathy with the genuine need of modern men.

The difficulties of the new age were much more urgent than those which the orthodox moralists were concerned with. The moralists insisted that conduct must conform to the established code; what really worried men was how to adjust their conduct to the novel circumstances which confronted them. When they discovered that those who professed to be moralists were continuing to deny that the novelty of modern things had any bearing upon human conduct, and that morality was a word signifying a return to usages which it was impossible to follow, even if it were desirable, there was a kind of tacit agreement to let the moralists be moral and to find other language in which to describe the difference between good and bad, right and wrong. Mr. Joad is not unrepresentative of this reaction into contempt when he speaks of "the dowagers, the aunts, the

old maids, the parsons, the town councillors, the clerks, the members of vigilance committees and purity leagues, all those who are themselves too old to enjoy sex, too unattractive to obtain what they would wish to enjoy, or too respectable to prefer enjoyment to respectability." Thus for many the name of moralist came to be very nearly synonymous with antipathy to the genius and the vitality of the modern age.

But it is idle for moralists to ascribe the decline of their influence to the perversity of their fellow creatures. The phenomenon is world-wide. Moreover, it is most intensely present at precisely those points where the effect of science and the machine technology have been most thoroughly manifested. The moralists are not confronted with a scandal but with history. They have to come to terms with a process in the life of mankind which is working upon the inner springs of being, and altering inevitably the premises of conduct. They need not suppose that their pews are empty and that their exhortations are ignored because modern men are really as willful as the manners of the younger generation lead them to conclude. Much of what appears to be a tough self-sufficiency is protective: it is a brittle crust covering depths of uncertainty. If the advice of moralists is ignored, it is not because this generation is too proud to listen, or unaware that it has anything to learn. On the contrary, there is such curiosity and questioning as never before engaged so large a number of men. The audience to which a genuine moralist might speak is there. If it is inattentive when the orthodox moralist speaks, it is because he seems to speak irrelevantly.

The trouble with the moralists is in the moralists themselves: they have failed to understand their times. They think they are

## *The Moralist in an Unbelieving World*

dealing with a generation that refuses to believe in ancient authority. They are, in fact, dealing with a generation that cannot believe in it. They think they are confronted with men who have an irrational preference for immorality, whereas the men and women about them are ridden by doubts because they do not know what they prefer, nor why. The moralists fancy that they are standing upon the rock of eternal truth, surveying the chaos about them. They are greatly mistaken. Nothing in the modern world is more chaotic—not its politics, its business, or its sexual relations—than the minds of orthodox moralists who suppose that the problem of morals is somehow to find a way of reinforcing the sanctions which are dissolving. How can we, they say in effect, find formulas and rhetoric potent enough to make men behave? How can we revive in them that love and fear of God, that sense of the creature's dependence upon his creator, that obedience to the commands of a heavenly king, which once gave force and effect to the moral code?

They have misconceived the moral problem, and therefore they misconceive the function of the moralist. An authoritative code of morals has force and effect when it expresses the settled customs of a stable society: the pharisee can impose upon the minority only such conventions as the majority find appropriate and necessary. But when customs are unsettled, as they are in the modern world, by continual change in the circumstances of life, the pharisee is helpless. He cannot command with authority because his commands no longer imply the usages of the community: they express the prejudices of the moralist rather than the practices of men. When that happens, it is presumptuous to issue moral commandments, for in fact nobody

has authority to command. It is useless to command when nobody has the disposition to obey. It is futile when nobody really knows exactly what to command. In such societies, wherever they have appeared among civilized men, the moralist has ceased to be an administrator of usages and has had to become an interpreter of human needs. For ages when custom is unsettled are necessarily ages of prophecy. The moralist cannot teach what is revealed; he must reveal what can be taught. He has to seek insight rather than to preach.

The disesteem into which moralists have fallen is due at bottom to their failure to see that in an age like this one the function of the moralist is not to exhort men to be good but to elucidate what the good is. The problem of sanctions is secondary. For sanctions cannot be artificially constructed: they are a product of agreement and usage. Where no agreement exists, where no usages are established, where ideals are not clarified, and where conventions are not followed comfortably by the mass of men, there are not, and cannot be, sanctions. It is possible to command where most men are already obedient. But even the greatest general cannot discipline a whole army at once. It is only when the greater part of his army is with him that he can quell the mutiny of a faction.

The acids of modernity are dissolving the usages and the sanctions to which men once habitually conformed. It is therefore impossible for the moralist to command. He can only persuade. To persuade he must show that the course of conduct he advocates is not an arbitrary pattern to which vitality must submit, but that which vitality itself would choose if it were clearly understood. He must be able to show that goodness is victorious vitality and badness

defeated vitality; that sin is the denial and virtue the fulfilment of the promise inherent in the purposes of men. The good, said the Greek moralist, is "that which all things aim at"; we may perhaps take this to mean that the good is that which men would wish to do if they knew what they were doing.

If the morality of the naive hedonist who blindly seeks the gratification of his instincts is irrational in that he trusts immature desire, disregards intelligence, and damns the consequences, the morality of the pharisee is no less irrational. It reduces itself to the wholly arbitrary proposition that the best life for man would be some other kind of life than that which satisfies his nature. The true function of the moralist in an age when usage is unsettled is what Aristotle, who lived in such an age, described it to be: to promote good conduct by discovering and explaining the mark at which things aim. The moralist is irrelevant, if not meddlesome and dangerous, unless in his teaching he strives to give a true account, imaginatively conceived, of that which experience would show is desirable among the choices that are possible and necessary. If he is to be listened to, and if he is to deserve a hearing among his fellows, he must set himself this task which is so much humbler than to command and so much more difficult than to exhort: he must seek to anticipate and to supplement the insight of his fellow men into the problems of their adjustment to reality. He must find ways to make clear and ordered and expressive those concerns which are latent but overlaid and confused by their pre-occupations and misunderstandings.

Could he do that with perfect lucidity he would not need to summon the police nor evoke the fear of Hell: Hell would be

what it really is, and what in all inspired moralities it has always been understood to be, the very quality of evil itself. Nor would he find himself in the absurd predicament of seeming to argue that virtue is highly desirable but intensely unpleasant. It would not be necessary to praise goodness, for it would be that which men most ardently desired. Were the nature of good and evil really made plain by moralists, their teachings would appear to the modern listener not like exhortations from without, but as Keats said of poetry: "a wording of his own highest thoughts and . . . almost a remembrance."

## *2. The Choice of a Way*

What modernity requires of the moralist is that he should see with an innocent eye how men must reform their wants in a world which is not concerned to make them happy. The problem, as I have tried to show, is not a new one. It has been faced and solved by the masters of wisdom. What is new is the scale on which the problem is presented—in that so many must face it now—and its radical character in that the organic bonds of custom and belief are dissolving. There ensues a continual necessity of adjusting their lives to complex novelty. In such a world simple customs are unsuitable and authoritative commandments incredible. No prescription can now be written which men can naively and obediently follow. They have, therefore, to re-educate their wants by an understanding of their own relation to a world which is unconcerned with their hopes and fears. From the moralists they can get only hypotheses—distillations of experience carefully examined—probabilities, that is to say, upon which they may begin to act, but which they themselves

## *The Moralist in an Unbelieving World*

must constantly correct by their own insight.

It is difficult for the orthodox moralists to believe that amid the ruins of authority men will ever learn to do this. They can point to the urban crowds and ask whether anyone supposes that such persons are capable of ordering their lives by so subtle an instrument as the human understanding. They can insist with unanswerable force that this is absurd: that the great mass of men must be guided by rules and moved by the symbols of hope and fear. And they can ask what there is in the conception of the moralist as I have outlined it which takes the character of the populace into account.

What I take into account first of all is the fact, which it seems to me is indisputable, that for the modern populace the old rules are becoming progressively unsuitable and the old symbols of hope and fear progressively unreal. I ascribe that to the inherent character of the modern ways of living. I conclude from this that if the populace must be led, if it must have easily comprehended rules, if it must have common symbols of hope and fear, the question is: How are its leaders to be developed, rules to be worked out, symbols created? The ultimate question is not how the populace is to be ruled, but what the teachers are to think. That is the question that has to be settled first: it is the preface to everything else.

For while moralists are at sixes and sevens in their own souls, not much can be done about morality, however high or low may be our estimates of the popular intelligence and character. If it were necessary to assume that ideals are relevant only if they are universally attainable, it would be a waste of time to discuss them. For it is evident enough that many, if not most

men, must fail to comprehend what modern morality implies. But to recognize this is not to prophesy that the world is doomed unless men perform the miracle of reverting to their ancestral tradition. This is not the first time in the history of mankind when a revolution in the affairs of men has produced chaos in the human spirit. The world can endure a good deal of chaos. It always has. The ideal inherent in any age is never realized completely: Greece, which we like to idealize as an oasis of rationality, was only in some respects Hellenic; the Ages of Faith were only somewhat Christian. The processes of nature and of society go on somehow none the less. Men are born and they live and die with some happiness and some sorrow though they neither envisage wholly nor nearly approximate the ideals they pursue.

But if civilization is to be coherent and confident it must be *known* in that civilization what its ideals are. There must exist in the form of clearly available ideas an understanding of what the fulfillment of the promise of that civilization might mean, an imaginative conception of the good at which it might and, if it is to flourish, at which it must aim. That knowledge, though no one has it perfectly, and though relatively few have it at all, is the principle of all order and certainty in the life of that people. By it they can clarify the practical conduct of life in some measure, and add immeasurably to its dignity.

To elucidate the ideals with which the modern world is pregnant is the original business of the moralist. In so far as he succeeds in disentangling that which men think they believe from that which it is appropriate for them to believe, he is opening his mind to a true vision of the good life. The vision itself we can discern only faintly, for we have as yet only the occa-

sional and fragmentary testimony of sages and saints and heroes, dim anticipations here and there, a most imperfect science of human behavior, and our own obscure endeavor to make explicit and rational the stresses of the modern world within our own souls. But we can begin to see, I think, that the evidence converges upon the theory that what the sages have prophesied as high religion, what psychologists delineate as matured personality, and the disinterestedness which the Great Society requires for its practical fulfillment, are all of a piece, and are the basic elements of a modern morality. I think the truth lies in this theory.

If it does, experience will enrich and refine it, and what is now an abstract principle arrived at by intuition and dialectic will engender ideas that marshal, illuminate, and anticipate the subtle and intricate detail of our actual experience. That at least can be our belief. In the meantime, the modern moralist cannot expect soon to construct a systematic and harmonious moral edifice like that which St. Thomas Aquinas and Dante constructed to house the aspirations of the medieval world. He is in a much earlier phase in the evolution of his world, in the phase of inquiry and prophecy rather than of ordering and harmonizing, and he is under the necessity of remaining close to the elements of experience in order to apprehend them freshly. He cannot, therefore, permit the old symbols of faith and the old formulations of right and wrong to prejudice his insight. In so far as they contain wisdom for him or can become its vehicles, he will return to them. But he cannot return to them with honor or with sincerity until he has himself gone and drunk deeply at the sources of experience from which they originated.

Only when he has done that can he again in any honest sense take possession of the wisdom which he inherits. It requires wisdom to understand wisdom; the music is nothing if the audience is deaf. In the great moral systems and the great religions of mankind are embedded the record of how men have dealt with destiny, and only the thoughtless will argue that that record is obsolete and insignificant. But it is overlaid with much that is obsolete and for that reason it is undeciphered and inexpressive. The wisdom it contains has to be discovered anew before the old symbols will yield up their meaning. That is the only way in which Bacon's aphorism can be fulfilled, that "a little philosophy inclineth man's mind to atheism, but depth in philosophy bringeth men's minds about to religion." The depth in philosophy which can bring them about is a much deeper and more poignant experience than complacent churchmen suppose.

It can be no mere settling back into that from which men in the ardor of their youth escaped. This man and that may settle back, to be sure; he may cease to inquire though his questions are unanswered. But such conformity is sterile, and due to mere weariness of mind and body. The inquiry goes on because it has to go on, and while the vitality of our race is unimpaired, there will be men who feel with Mr. Whitehead that "to acquiesce in discrepancy is destructive of candor and of moral cleanliness," and that "it belongs to the self-respect of intellect to pursue every tangle of thought to its final unravelment." The crisis in the religious loyalties of mankind cannot be resolved by weariness and good nature, or by the invention of little intellectual devices for straightening out the dilemmas of biology and Genesis, his-

## *The Moralist in an Unbelieving World*

tory and the Gospels, with which so many churchmen busy themselves. Beneath these little conflicts there is a real dilemma which modern men cannot successfully evade. "Where is the way where light dwelleth?" They are compelled to choose consciously, clearly, and with full realization of what the choice implies, between religion as a system of cosmic government and religion as insight into a cleansed and matured personality: between God conceived as the master of that fate, creator, providence, and king, and God conceived as the highest good at which they might aim. For God is the supreme symbol in which man expresses his destiny, and if that symbol is confused, his life is confused.

Men have not, hitherto, had to make that choice, for the historic churches have sheltered both kinds of religious experience, and the same mysteries have been the symbols of both. That confusion is no longer benign because men are no longer unconscious of it. They are aware that it is a confusion, and they are stultified by it. Because the popular religion of supernatural governments is undermined, the symbols of religion do not provide clear channels for religious experience. They are choked with the debris of dead notions in which men are unable to believe and unwilling to disbelieve. The result is a frustration in the inner life which will persist as long as the leaders of thought speak of God in more senses than one, and thus render all faith invalid, insincere, and faltering.

### *3. The Religion of the Spirit*

The choice is at last a personal one. The decision is rendered not by argument but by feeling. Those who believe that their salvation lies in obedience to, and com-

munion with, the King of Creation can know how whole-hearted their faith is by the confidence of their own hearts. If they are at peace, they need inquire no further. There are, however, those who do not find a principle of order in the belief that they are related to a supernatural power. They cannot be argued into the ancient belief, for it has been dissolved by the circumstances of their lives. They are deeply perplexed. They have learned that the absence of belief is vacancy; they know, from disillusionment and anxiety, that there is no freedom in mere freedom. They must find, then, some other principle which will give coherence and direction to their lives.

If the argument in these pages is sound, they need not look for and, in fact, cannot hope for some new and unexpected revelation. Since they are unable to find a principle of order in the authority of a will outside themselves, there is no place they can find it except in an ideal of the human personality. But they do not have to invent such an ideal out of hand. The ideal way of life for men who must make their own terms with experience and find their own happiness has been stated again and again. It is that only the regenerate, the disinterested, the mature, can make use of freedom. This is the central insight of the teachers of wisdom. We can see now, I think, that it is also the mark at which the modern study of human nature points. We can see, too, that it is the pattern of successful conduct in the most advanced phases of the development of modern civilization. The ideal, then, is an old one, but its confirmation and its practical pertinence are new. The world is able at last to take seriously what its greatest teachers have said. And since all things need a name, if they are to be talked about, devotion to this ideal may properly be called

by the name which these greatest teachers gave it; it may be called the religion of the spirit. At the heart of it is the knowledge that the goal of human effort is to be able, in the words I have so often quoted from Confucius, to follow what the heart desires without transgressing what is right.

In an age when custom is dissolved and authority is broken, the religion of the spirit is not merely a possible way of life. In principle it is the only way which transcends the difficulties. It alone is perfectly neutral about the constitution of the universe, in that it has no expectation that the universe will justify naive desire. Therefore, the progress of science cannot upset it. Its indifference to what the facts may be is indeed the very spirit of scientific inquiry. A religion which rests upon particular conclusions in astronomy, biology, and history may be fatally injured by the discovery of new truths. But the religion of the spirit does not depend upon creeds and cosmologies; it has no vested interest in any particular truth. It is concerned not with the organization of matter, but with the quality of human desire.

It alone can endure the variety and complexity of things, for the religion of the spirit has no thesis to defend. It seeks excellence wherever it may appear, and finds it in anything which is inwardly understood; its motive is not acquisition but sympathy. Whatever is completely understood with sympathy for its own logic and purposes ceases to be external and stubborn and is wholly tamed. To understand is not only to pardon, but in the end to love. There is no itch in the religion of the spirit to make men good by bearing down upon them with righteousness and making them conform to a pattern. Its social principle is to live and let live. It has the only tolerable code of manners for a so-

cietly in which men and women have become freely-moving individuals, no longer held in the grooves of custom by their ancestral ways. It is the only disposition of the soul which meets the moral difficulties of an anarchical age, for its principle is to civilize the passions, not by regulating them imperiously, but by transforming them with a mature understanding of their place in an adult environment. It is the only possible hygiene of the soul for men whose selves have become disjointed by the loss of their central certainties, because it counsels them to draw the sting of possessiveness out of their passions, and thus by removing anxiety to render them harmonious and serene.

The philosophy of the spirit is an almost exact reversal of the worldling's philosophy. The ordinary man believes that he will be blessed if he is virtuous, and therefore virtue seems to him a price he pays now for a blessedness he will some day enjoy. While he is waiting for his reward, therefore, virtue seems to him drab, arbitrary, and meaningless. For the reward is deferred, and there is really no instant proof that virtue really leads to the happiness he has been promised. Because the reward is deferred, it too becomes vague and dubious, for that which we never experience, we cannot truly understand. In the realm of the spirit, blessedness is not deferred: there is no future which is more auspicious than the present; there are no compensations later for evils now. Evil is to be overcome now and happiness is to be achieved now, for the Kingdom of God is within you. The life of the spirit is not a commercial transaction in which the profit has to be anticipated; it is a kind of experience which is inherently profitable.

And so the mature man would take the

world as it comes, and within himself remain quite unperturbed. When he acted, he would know that he was only testing an hypothesis, and if he failed, he would know that he had made a mistake. He would be quite prepared for the discovery that he might make mistakes, for his intelligence would be disentangled from his hopes. The failure of his experiment could not, therefore, involve the failure of his life. For the aspect of life which implicated his soul would be his understanding of life, and, to the understanding, defeat is no less interesting than victory. It would be no effort, therefore, for him to be tolerant, and no annoyance to be skeptical. He would face pain with fortitude, for he would have put it away from the inner chambers of his soul. Fear would not haunt him, for he would be without compulsion to seize anything and without anxiety as to its fate. He would be strong, not with the strength of hard resolves, but because he was free of that tension which vain expectations beget. Would his life be uninteresting because he was disinter-

ested? He would have the whole universe, rather than the prison of his own hopes and fears, for his habitation, and in imagination all possible forms of being. How could that be dull unless he brought the dullness with him? He might dwell with all beauty and all knowledge, and they are inexhaustible. Would he, then, dream idle dreams? Only if he chose to. For he might go quite simply about the business of the world, a good deal more effectively perhaps than the worldling, in that he did not place an absolute value upon it, and deceive himself. Would he be hopeful? Not if to be hopeful was to expect the world to submit rather soon to his vanity. Would he be hopeless? Hope is an expectation of favors to come, and he would take his delights here and now. Since nothing gnawed at his vitals, neither doubt nor ambition, nor frustration, nor fear, he would move easily through life. And so whether he saw the thing as comedy, or high tragedy, or plain farce, he would affirm that it is what it is, and that the wise man can enjoy it.

## DEMOCRACY

by PHILIP WYLIE

AMERICA began with the idea of giving to every man an equal chance. The noble thesis that the majority of common men, properly informed, will judge every problem rightly was the philosophy which prompted that definition of liberty. It was another way of saying that a knowledge of the truth would set men free: each man, and all men. In action, it meant that individual human beings would strive in-

cessantly to become more conscious of reality and would put obligations to others ahead of their own ambitions.

That is democracy.

The idea is so fundamental to man's psychology that any compromise of it, or any deviation from it, is necessarily a backward step. A step, that is, toward less individuated men, less informed men, less civilized men, men less aware, men in

From *Generation of Vipers*, copyright, 1942, by Philip Wylie, and reprinted by permission of Rinehart & Company, Inc., publishers.



## *Manifestoes for Tomorrow*

bondage to whatever notion caused the backward step.

The apparent handicap of democracy is inefficiency. The inevitable accompaniment of democratic living is the struggle of every sort of minority against the majority to force particular judgments. But, according to the philosophy which I have just discussed, there can be no advantage without cost.

The uproar in our free press, the fumbling of our Washington bureaucracy, the conflict of our laws, and the disagreements of our leaders are results of democratic behavior. They can be regarded as handicaps, however, only by those men who have forgotten, or never knew, or willfully abandoned the concept of democracy.

Another way to regard social organization is to realize that the philosophy of the state is only a magnification of the philosophy of the person, and the philosophy of all states only a magnification of the philosophy of one. To the man and the woman who understand the philosophy of democracy and live by it, there is never any confusion about how to feel or what to do. Such people know that the confusions are superficial, that a thousand democracies could perish, but that democracy would prevail everywhere in the end. Such people are occupied in the spread of an understanding of democracy. Patriotism, therefore, is to be concerned about your country—not necessarily to adulate it.

Too many of us have lost sight of the single, simple truth by which we were first associated and by which alone we can continue in any lasting association. Too many learned men—and too many fools.

A new corollary of truth is never evident at once to the masses. That is why minori-

ties must remain vocal. Only through freedom can they educate masses to enlargements of the fundamental concept. The danger opposing that is the chance it gives minorities to embrace lies—new and old—and to force them upon unwatchful masses or to put them in effect through the political default of masses.

That is why a person who does not vote is betraying himself.

That is why a person who does not do everything in his power to find out about both sides of a question, and all candidates, is digging the grave of his liberty.

That is why a person who does not consult his own decision rather than the political predetermination of a bloc is chaining himself link by link to the old mobism that has spawned, and swarmed and sloughed since the Ice Ages.

We can have one categorical premise only: the democratic premise—leaving no room for any other—demanding the right to all information as the route to all understanding and judgment—and transcending in private, national and international existence all special pleading. It is the only possible social ideal. It is also the ideal of Christians and of scientists, of all little men and of all truly great men, and it has been in all their history. It is not a road to imminent perfection. The squabbles of democracy—even its civil war—while they testify to the imperfections of men testify also to the completeness of his idealism.

There are not four freedoms, but one only, and the other name of it is truth. Turned about, it is equally real to say that there is not just one freedom, but an infinite number of freedoms, or as many freedoms as there are people willing to sacrifice themselves for the freedom of others. We will always be engaged in politi-

cal struggles "testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure." We who made thirteen inharmonious colonies into one democracy and who preserved a democratic nation even after its states had warred upon each other cannot repress a burning impulse to make the world safe for democracy—to give it what our President has dramatized as four freedoms.

In the period that followed the War Between the States, the South, staying in the nation gamely, made a measurelessly greater spiritual contribution to democracy than the victorious North. It is still making that contribution. And the light to be elicited from the vanquished nations in this war of democracy for the world is that kind of light. That is the light which went out in 1914. That is the light which is beginning to shine in all of Asia. That is the light for which our polyglot democracy is an intended torchbearer. The discovery of America and the rise of the United States as a free land welcoming all peoples was a teleological anticipation of this age. The circumstance can be credited to God, to human instinct, or to chance—but it is manifest. The seeds of democracy ripened here in the breast of every sort of human being.

Such recollections of the democratic ideal—the ideal of ancient people and the ideal of ourselves in the past few generations—such exhortations as mine—will be repugnant to many wishful thinkers, impatient individuals who have surfeited our scene, these last laggard years, with economic panaceas and social nostrums. There is no true left or right, but only the middle way. The vendors of patent social medicines expect, to a man, that by deviating from the long, hard route they will uncover a short cut for everybody. The uni-

versality of the grisly battle joined on account of their error is not a lesson to them, for, having embarked upon their diagonals with great to-do, they would rather risk a millennium of doom than the exposure of their fallacies.

They are quacks. They claim that a dose of an ism will cure all human ills. They have been lost in the corrupt theory that goods and good are one. The complexity of our society has, by mystical transference, convinced them that the old, simple philosophy is not sufficiently intricate any more. So they have thought up numberless pseudo-spiritual ideologies which are based upon the physical elements of modern existence. Insisting that their ends are holy because they are superficially unselfish, they also insist that any means justifies those ends. Many of them are willing to compel liberalism or collectivism or toryism by machine guns and we are in as much peril from erudite boobs as from mere boobies. The day they can show how a machine-gunning of the people, by the people, for the people will make the survivors nobler, I will recant.

The quack doctors must not prevail at home ever, or abroad again. If we analyze their remedies by the litmus of the simple philosophy of democracy, we can always discover the dross in each. There is, in consequence, no reason for us to be misled or confused or frightened except the selfish reasons in our heads.

The liberals believe in the pure principle: the justness of informed common man. But almost every liberal wants to define and restrict the nature of the information given to common man, and has some extra premise besides: a fiscal policy, for example, or pacifism, which is irrelevant to American democracy so long as

## *Manifestoes for Tomorrow*

there are undemocratic men or undemocratic nations.

No communist can be democratic. His dogma comes before his belief in ethical humanity. It is obvious that we should learn not to exploit each other. It is obvious that we should seek ways by which the productiveness of machinery will enslave none and serve all according to their creature needs and, in addition, according to their individual abilities. But if every man were as rich as a king it would mean only that the wars were fought with more extravagant ammunition until every man became as wise as God and as humble. That day is far off.

The conservatives, like the liberals, are of every shade, while the communists all have one dogma—though they switch it often enough. Conservatives, like communists, put more trust in the materialism of common man than in his idealism; they believe that the profit motive is the foundation of morality. It might be arguable, at least, if the conservatives could throw into the argument their own motives for their own profits, but even to attempt that requires a higher symbol than materialism. In consequence, conservative philosophies also contain extrademocratic premises, of which the "sanctity" of private property is a sample.

Collective bargaining is an earned democratic right. It is not democratic to run unions by any but the democratic method. It is not democratic to allow them to become untaxable corporations. It is not democratic to let them keep their books secret. The wish of labor in society at any time can be expressed only by the free choices of the people who work—not by liberalism, conservatism, communism, or fundamentalism. Individual farmers belong to all the above groups. Through their or-

ganizations they have formed a political bloc in Washington which has artificially pitted them against several other groups, especially labor. Actually, the farmers are part of labor now. They depend upon the machine. Their land has become raw material for the factories. Attempts to distinguish them from labor are based on concepts of a past age. Their organization for collective bargaining should in the future parallel the increase of labor's voice in management.

Nobody with any sense can doubt that common man is tending toward a new schedule for the distribution of his profits. That will gradually shift part of the responsibility for agriculture and productive management. But if the tendency brings an end to private ownership, democracy will have to start all over, after a later, greater catastrophe than ours. On the other hand, if an increase of sharing of profits with labor and with farmers is revolution—then there is a revolution on hand and let those who are frightened make the most of it. The years ahead will see many particular experiments in socialization. America has made them throughout its history. Some will fail, and the materials, industries or services involved will revert to private management. Some will succeed.

I do not believe, however, that Americans will find lasting satisfaction in the socialization of their industries. The sources of all raw material except land for farming may some day be bought by the people and evenhandedly administered. But I doubt if creative enterprise will be government-controlled for long, no matter what experiments are made in that direction. The reason for my doubt is subjective—but it should be a consolation to those terrified individualists who still are rugged and

honest, Americans are the foremost builders and producers in the history of man. They always will be. As such, they will not tolerate the inefficiencies in their material activities that they tolerate in the operation of their democratic institutions. The blast of rage which followed revelations of governmental mismanagement after the last war has not waited for peace, in this one, and each of the millions upon millions of angry shouts now leveled at the blundering of bureaucracy is actually a note of exhilarating encouragement for those who fear postwar collectivism in America.

The businessmen—good, bad and indifferent—are too myopic to realize that. But it is true. The New Deal has compelled us to be basically responsible for each other—which we should always have been. It is also performing the second, involuntary favor of proving that such responsibility cannot be extended to absolute domain.

When the war is ended, we will have to rebuild the world. It would be useful if we were planning the job now, and telling the conquered people about our plans for them. Washington is still afraid to do that, owing to certain prejudices which are the vested mental property of the American Old School Tie appeasers in various government departments. But we know the building assignment will be America's: nobody else can undertake it. The world will be a wreck, just as Hitler promised, because it chose to be ruined rather than ruled by him. We cannot let our two billion fellow men revert to barbarism in those ruins, any more than we could allow Hitler to make slaves of them. Had we done that we would have been nothing more than the last band to be enslaved. If, with victory, we abandon our comrades in their rubble we will merely

join them ultimately in poverty and pestilence.

We will have to lend them money—at low interest and for many years. We will have to give them much. Such extensions of trust will be America's price for her lack of trust in the past—her lack, even, of interest in other people. We will pay the price in taxes and probably, on occasion, in disappointments. Such a world contribution cannot be made by a collectivist bureaucracy. It would be unthinkable to totalitarians. Most of it will not be good business in the narrow sense of visible six per cent returns. It may mean that our national debt will increase for a time more fabulously than it already has; the very thought requires more democratic idealism than materialistic scheming. And yet, it is the only possible way to repay the debt in the end.

If we are idealistic enough—and I think we are—our giant enterprise will set in motion the material activities which will solve the vast problems of postwar conversion. Conversion for immediate domestic consumption would create a short-term boom—and little else, perhaps. Conversion for world reconstruction would open up the one everlasting frontier. We can win the war and re-establish man. Hitler did not foresee that capacity. He understood the fallacy of our Cinderella legend; he never knew about other American legends—about Paul Bunyan, or his modern cousins, Superman, Buck Rogers and Popeye. If we tackle the job in that spirit, all the lamps in all the earth will begin to burn again. But if we have not learned our lesson—if we ignore democracy and pursue some tempting ism—if we elect ignoramuses to the House and send loud local pleaders to the Senate—if we give up any more of our precious hold on democratic

## *Manifestoes for Tomorrow*

morality—we are done for, just as I have said.

This war is a true crusade. It can be the last one.

Material gain is incidental to self-discipline and has always been.

It depends on you.

You will have a road to Tierra del Fuego and a road to Alaska. You will have ferries between the Diomedes and a road that goes to Moscow and on to Paris and from Suez into Africa. For a while, you will drive your light metal and plastic cars over those roads. Then you will use them to haul fuel for your private planes. Nothing is surer. You—not your children—will week-end in Paris or Rio. You will hunt in the Andes—a few hours from your office.

You will fish in the waters off New Zealand—a long trip: twenty hours. In your living room, in a few years, will be a continual moving picture, with color and sound, of any place where something is going on. Your son will talk to his girl in Ceylon over a gadget that shows her moving picture.

All this—mind you—if you can keep your single ideal of democracy fixed on the point of giving and sharing. Endless riches of the human spirit. Endless physical attainments. The second, because of the first.

No distance. . . .

No time. . . .

No isolation. . . .

One world—and you in it.

## THE ANATOMY OF PEACE

by EMERY REVES

*Editors' Note:* The book from which the following selection is made has had a remarkable publishing history. *The Anatomy of Peace* was first published by Harper & Brothers on June 13, 1945. Although the author clearly underlined the cause of World War II and gave definite directions for the attainment of peace, little discussion of his ideas arose at first, despite the excellence of the reviews.

Then on August 6, 1945, President Truman announced the raid on Hiroshima and the first use of the atomic bomb. Many of the readers of *The Anatomy of Peace*, faced with the alternatives of no world at all or a world controlling itself in the interests of peace, remembered Mr. Reves' book and began to tell others of its urgency and relevance in an atomic world.

On October 10 an open letter recommending the book appeared in *The New York Times* as well as in 50 other leading newspapers. It was inspired by former Associate Justice of the Supreme Court Owen J. Roberts and its signers included Senator J. W. Fulbright, Senator Claude Pepper, Senator Elbert D. Thomas, Chairman of the Military Affairs Committee, Reverend Henry St. George Tucker, Presiding Bishop, Protestant Episcopal Church in the U.S.A., Reverend Edward A. Conway, S.J., Dr. Louis Finkelstein, President of the Jewish Theological Seminary, Mortimer J. Adler, Charles G. Bolte, Chairman of the American Veterans Committee, Gardner Cowles, Jr., Professor Albert Einstein, Dorothy Canfield Fisher, Albert D. Lasker, Thomas Mann, Christopher Morley, Lt. Cord Meyer, USMCR, Veteran

From *The Anatomy of Peace*, by Emery Reves. Harper & Brothers. Copyright, 1945, by Emery Reves.

## *The Anatomy of Peace*

Adviser to Commander Harold E. Stassen at San Francisco, Carl Van Doren, Mark Van Doren, Walter F. Wanger, and Robert J. Watt, International Representative of the A. F. of L. Serious consideration of the ideas of the book seemed to these men "of immediate urgent necessity, unless civilization is determined on suicide."

When Professor Albert Einstein, discoverer of the formula which was the starting point for atomic research, wrote in the November 1945 issue of *The Atlantic Monthly* that the book was "the answer to the present political problem precipitated by the release of atomic energy," sales of the book increased rapidly.

In its December 1945 issue, *The Reader's Digest* began its condensation of the book, and the editors arranged to introduce the book before 23,000 discussion groups across the United States. Larger printings now began to come from the presses, and the book neared the top of the national best-seller lists in January. In mid-1946 Pocket Books issued it in their large format edition, and arrangements were made to publish it in England, France, Holland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Switzerland, Italy, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Brazil, Argentina, and other countries.

Some notion of the scope and central concept of *The Anatomy of Peace* may be

gained from a reading of its Table of Contents, which is here reproduced in its entirety:

### Chapter I. A Copernican World

#### PART I

- II. Failure of Capitalism
- III. Failure of Socialism
- IV. Failure of Religion
- V. Road to Fascism

#### PART II

- VI. Nation-Feudalism
- VII. What is War?
- VIII. The Historical Meaning of Sovereignty
- IX. Treaty or Law
- X. Super-State and the Individual

#### PART III

- XI. Fallacy of Internationalism
- XII. Fallacy of Self-Determination of Nations
- XIII. Fallacy of Collective Security
- XIV. The Melee
- XV. Law . . . Conquest

Mr. Reves has kindly permitted us to reprint the following selections from the book: Chapters I and XII entire, and portions of Chapter XV.

### CHAPTER I

#### *A Copernican World*

NOTHING can distort the true picture of conditions and events in this world more than to regard one's own country as the center of the universe, and to view all things solely in their relationship to this fixed point. It is inevitable that such a method of observation should create an entirely false perspective. Yet this is the only method admitted and used by the seventy or eighty national governments of

our world, by our legislators and diplomats, by our press and radio. All the conclusions, principles and policies of the peoples are necessarily drawn from the warped picture of the world obtained by so primitive a method of observation.

Within such a contorted system of assumed fixed points, it is easy to demonstrate that the view taken from each point corresponds to reality. If we admit and

## *Manifestoes for Tomorrow*

apply this method, the viewpoint of every single nation appears indisputably correct and wholly justified. But we arrive at a hopelessly confused and grotesque over-all picture of the world.

Let us see how international events between the two world wars look from some of the major national vantage points.

*The United States of America*, faithful to the Monroe Doctrine and to its traditions of aloofness from Europe, did not want to enter the first World War. But the Germans were sinking American ships, violating American rights and threatening American interests. So in 1917, the United States was forced to go to war in defense of American rights. They went into battle determined to fight the war to end all war, and to "make the world safe for democracy." They fought bravely and spent lavishly. Their intervention decided the outcome of the struggle in favor of the Allies. But as soon as the shooting was over, the major Allied powers—Britain, France, Italy and Japan—betrayed the common cause. They were unwilling to base the peace on Wilson's ideals. They signed secret treaties between themselves. They did not want a just peace. They wanted to annex territories, islands, bases; they wanted to impose high reparation payments on the defeated countries and other measures of vengeance. America, disgusted by the quarrels and selfishness of the other nations and disillusioned by the old game of power politics, retired from the European hornet's nest, after having been abused, outsmarted and double-crossed by her former associates. America wanted only to be allowed to mind her own business, to build up the wealth and happiness of her own citizens. The foreign nations—who would have been crushed without American intervention and who were

saved by America—even defaulted on their war debts and refused to repay the loans America had made to them in their hour of danger. So even financial and economic relations with the European powers had to be reduced to a minimum and American capital had to be protected by prohibiting loans to defaulting foreigners. American policy was fully justified by the ensuing events. Clouds were again gathering in Europe. Military dictatorships were arising in many countries, a race of armaments had started, violence broke out and the whole continent was on the verge of another great war—more of the old European quarrels and power politics. Naturally, it was of primary interest to the United States to keep out of these senseless internecine old-world fights. The supreme duty of the American government to its people was to maintain strict neutrality toward the warring nations across the ocean. Thanks to the weakness of the appeasement policy and the blindness of Britain, France and Soviet Russia, the totalitarian powers succeeded in conquering the entire European continent. German troops occupied the whole Atlantic seacoast from Norway to Equatorial Africa. Simultaneously, the Japanese succeeded in conquering the entire Chinese coastline, menacing the American-controlled Philippine Islands. Incredible and unbelievable as it was, no one could fail to see that the European and Asiatic military powers, known as the Axis, were planning the conquest of North and South America. In sheer self-defense, America was obliged to transform herself into the arsenal of democracy, producing weapons for the British and Russians to fight the Germans. Then, on a day which will "live in infamy" the Japanese Empire launched an unprovoked aggression against peace-

loving America and, together with Germany and Italy, declared war upon her. Once forced into the war, the nation arose as one man. In a short time, it became obvious that once again the United States was saving the civilized Western world. Events have demonstrated that disarmament and disinterestedness cannot protect America from foreign aggression. Therefore, peace in the world can be preserved only if the United States maintains a large army, the biggest navy and the biggest air force in the world, and secures bases at all strategic points commanding the approaches to the Western Hemisphere.

How do these same twenty years look from the fixed point of the *British Isles*?

In 1914, Britain went to the defense of Belgium, France and Russia. It was impossible for her to stand by while militarist Germany was marching to occupy and control the Channel coast. Britain could not permit Germany to obtain European hegemony and to become the dominating industrial and military power on the Continent, menacing the lifelines of the British Empire and threatening to reduce the British Isles to starvation and poverty. When, at the cost of tremendous efforts and the lives of more than one million of her sons, Britain, together with her allies, won victory, she naturally wanted to see German military might eliminated once and for all from the path of the British Empire. It was only just that the German fleet be destroyed, that German colonies be annexed and that Germany be made to pay reparations. Unfortunately, the isolationists in America stabbed Wilson in the back and the United States deserted her allies. England remained alone to face the European problem. Without the United States and without the Dominions, she could not give the guarantees France demanded and

had to be careful lest after victory over Germany, France should take the place of the defeated Reich and become an overwhelmingly dominating military power on the Continent. As the French went berserk, refusing to disarm and occupying the Ruhr, England had to become the moderator in Europe and to continue the traditional balance-of-power policy that had been successful for so many centuries. Bolshevik Russia, after the failure of military intervention supported by the Allies, succeeded in stabilizing a Communist regime, and through the Third Internationale and the various Communist parties in Europe, threatened the entire Continent with revolution. Germany, suffering under the consequences of defeat and French intransigence, with six million unemployed, was particularly susceptible to revolutionary turmoil. It was of paramount importance for European peace that German economy be restored and stabilized. Mussolini had succeeded in re-establishing order in Italy and the growing strength of the National Socialist movement in Germany seemed to stem the tide of Bolshevism. But Great Britain's economic problems were becoming aggravated. The Americans erected high tariff walls and refused to import British goods, thus making it impossible for Great Britain to repay her war debts. She was forced to give up her traditional free trade policy and to enter into a preference system with the Dominions. Italian and German intentions by this time began to alarm France and the smaller countries of Europe. Two camps began to crystallize, one trying to preserve the *status quo* of the Treaty of Versailles, the other seeking revisions favorable to them. Then as now peace was England's paramount interest and her natural role was to be the mediator between the two



## *Manifestoes for Tomorrow*

factions, to attempt as many revisions as possible by peaceful means so as to check the dynamism of the dictatorships, and to prevent an outbreak of hostilities at any cost. When Italy embarked upon her unfortunate military operation in Ethiopia, England championed the principles of the League. Sanctions were voted and imposed upon the aggressor by more than fifty nations under British leadership. It was a most alarming factor that France, frightened by growing German power and in the hope of obtaining Italian assistance against Germany in Europe, gave Italy a free hand in Ethiopia. So the League was sabotaged by France. Italy could not be stopped except by intervention of the British fleet, which would have meant risking a major war and had to be avoided. Shortly after the Italian conquest of Ethiopia, Germany reoccupied the Rhineland. France, in her first reaction, wanted to march, but England prevented a military clash between the two major continental powers. For the pacification of Europe, an agreement was made with Germany granting her a new fleet, thirty-five per cent of the British tonnage. Thereafter, Germany and Italy formed a military alliance and provoked a civil war in Spain to try out new weapons and new methods of warfare, and to establish a regime friendly to them. This incident created a highly charged atmosphere all over Europe. Russians were actually fighting German and Italian forces on Spanish soil. Only by pursuing the strictest policy of nonintervention and exercising the utmost patience was England able to prevent France from intervening and spreading the fight all over the Continent. In the face of these threatening events, England succeeded in strengthening her ties with France. Unhappily, still further sacrifices had to be made to prevent a

war, which England could not risk, as she was almost completely unprepared. Other adjustments of the territorial status of Europe had to be considered. At Munich, British diplomacy was taxed to the utmost to obtain the transfer of German-inhabited Czechoslovak territories to the Reich without a violent conflict. Once again England had saved the peace. But after Munich, it was apparent that Germany had made up her mind to conquer Europe. England had to begin rearming and to look around for allies. Belgium and Holland, jealous of their neutrality, did not admit military discussions, but the alliance with France was strengthened, alliances with Poland and Rumania were signed and every effort was made to reach an understanding with the Soviet Union. The Poles, however, stubbornly refused to permit Russian troops passage across Polish territory in case of war and in the middle of negotiations in Moscow, a diplomatic bomb exploded. Russia, betraying her Western democratic friends, had signed a non-aggression pact with Nazi Germany. That gave Germany the green light to attack Poland. All this happened within a few days and England, honoring her pledged word, declared war upon Germany. It was impossible for Britain to bring military help to the Poles in time and Poland was defeated in a few weeks. British troops, however, were sent to France, the best-equipped army ever to cross the Channel. They, along with French soldiers, took their posts at the Belgian and German frontiers and waited for the German attack, believing that defense system they and their allies held to be impregnable. But Hitler, instead of opening an offensive against the Allies, attacked the peaceful and undefended neutral countries of Denmark and Norway. Britain immediately sent an ex-

## *The Anatomy of Peace*

peditionary force to Narvik, which fought gallantly but which had to withdraw before overwhelming enemy forces supported by land-based planes. Shortly thereafter, the Germans made a frontal attack against the west, occupying neutral Holland and Belgium in a few days. They turned the Maginot Line and cracked the French defenses. The King of Belgium surrendered. Only some of the British troops could be evacuated from Dunkirk and other ports of France. All the equipment of the British Expeditionary Force was lost. France, inadequately equipped and undermined by Nazi propaganda, betrayed her British ally by refusing to continue the fight on the side of the British Commonwealth in the Mediterranean and in Africa, and capitulated to Germany. The whole Continent was in German hands and England stood alone. The situation seemed hopeless. England was without defenses. The Luftwaffe began to bomb London and British industrial centers. Italy began to move against Egypt and Suez. Both the mother country and the lifeline of the empire in the Middle East were in mortal danger. Britain could have saved her empire had she accepted German hegemony in Europe, but she preferred to fight all alone, even if she had to fight on her beaches, on her hills and in her villages. Along with the sacrifice of tens of thousands of civilians, she won the Battle of Britain, fought off the Luftwaffe with a few fighter planes, fought the German submarines single-handed, mobilized her entire population and dispatched everything she could to the Near East to stem Mussolini's advancing armies. For more than a year, Britain alone defended the cause of democracy. Neither the Soviet Union nor the United States was prepared to enter the war on her side. Only when Germany actually

attacked Russia, and Japan bombed Pearl Harbor and invaded the Philippines did Russia and the United States join forces with the British Commonwealth to achieve final victory.

From the point of view of *France*, the picture looked like this:

In 1914, France suffered the second German invasion within half a century. The entire north and east of France were devastated and only by tremendous bloodshed and the sacrifice of a million and a half of her sons could France defend her soil. With the help of the Allies, Germany was finally defeated. The supreme thought in the mind of every Frenchman was to be secure against another German aggression. France felt strongly that as the bastion of Western democracy she was entitled to security, to prevent her soil becoming the permanent battlefield of Teutonic aggression. To obviate the constant threat of Germans on the west bank of the Rhine, France demanded the Rhine as the new Franco-German border. Further, she demanded that Germany be demilitarized and forced to make reparation for the damage caused to France. At the peace conferences, however, she was abandoned by the United States and even to some extent by England and was obliged to accept a compromise. After having yielded to Anglo-American pressure she asked the United States and Britain to guarantee her eastern frontiers against German revenge. They refused. With a population much smaller than Germany, with a stationary birth rate in the face of Germany's increasing population, France had to rely on her own armed strength and on what alliances she could make with the newly created, smaller states east and south of Germany. When the Reich began to sabotage reparation payments, France, standing on her rights,

## Manifestoes for Tomorrow

occupied the Ruhr, but was not supported by her allies. After America had withdrawn from Europe into isolation, France did her utmost to support the League of Nations and, with her smaller allies, suggested a mutual assistance pact within the League—the Geneva Protocol. Britain refused to commit herself. France found a substitute in the Locarno agreements which at least guaranteed security in the West. From the threat of reborn German militarism in the form of Nazism, she vainly sought protection from England and finally turned to Italy whose interest regarding the prevention of the Austrian Anschluss was identical with that of France. But Italy abused France's gesture and attacked Ethiopia, in violation of her obligations to the League. France was in a desperate position between the League and Mussolini, and in the end lost the friendship of Italy to uphold the League. When the Germans remilitarized the Rhineland, France was alarmed and called upon her partners in the Locarno Pact, but they turned a deaf ear and she had to accept the German *fait accompli*. Feeling abandoned and growing weaker in the face of rapidly increasing German military power, France sought an alliance with Russia but was hindered by Poland who, although allied with France, would not give Russian troops permission to march through Polish territory. When Germany and Italy fomented and supported the Franco military revolution against the Spanish Republic, it was obviously a move to encircle France. This maneuver foreboded grave events. France wanted to intervene on the republican side and thus prevent Franco, supported by Hitler and Mussolini, from coming to power. But England opposed such a move. So the French Republic had to stand by and

watch a hostile Fascist power being established by her enemies on her third land frontier. She had staked everything on her friendship with Britain. When it was obvious that Germany had become the dominating military and industrial power in Europe and that none of the other great powers, neither the United States nor Britain nor Russia, realized the imminence of danger, many Frenchmen felt that to oppose German might singlehanded was a suicidal policy, that the French must resign themselves to German supremacy in Europe and accept the position of a secondary power on the Continent. France's internal stability was greatly imperiled by a violent cleavage between capital and labor, and differences of opinion between those who advocated a French policy of collaboration with England and Russia and those who sought an arrangement with Germany. In spite of these difficulties, France kept faith with her British ally and continued to follow her lead. She accepted Munich, sacrificing Czechoslovakia, her most faithful friend on the Continent. Her armies were mobilized several times to be in readiness at critical moments. And when even Russia abandoned her, signing a treaty with Germany, and Hitler attacked Poland, France fulfilled her obligation toward her Polish ally, despite the difficulties and disappointments created by the pro-German Polish policy of the previous years. France declared war on Germany, mobilized six million men and exposed herself to the inrush of Nazi military might. She urged Britain to send strong forces across the Channel but England sent only two or three hundred thousand men and when the Germans attacked in the west, France had to carry the burden of fighting practically alone. The King of Belgium laid down arms. The entire

## *The Anatomy of Peace*

British Expeditionary Force was encircled and pushed into the sea at Dunkirk. The German Panzer divisions swept across all the northern departments of France with overwhelming force. In this critical moment, Italy stabbed France in the back and declared war. The military situation was hopeless. France appealed to America for help which was refused. The British withdrew, betraying their alliance with France in her darkest hour. There was no alternative but to accept the bitter humiliation of defeat and surrender, hoping for a miracle of resurrection and trying to accommodate France to the new order in Europe, to ease the suffering of her people. For four years, the French endured German occupation and helplessly watched the Nazis looting the country. They organized a heroic resistance movement both inside and outside France and four years later, after America had been forced into the war by Germany and Japan, when the Anglo-American troops landed on French beaches, French resistance forces from outside came with them, and French resistance armies within the country arose, liberating their cities and villages, and contributing considerably to the Allied victory.

The image of these same events during the same period appeared to the *German* people as follows:

For more than four years from 1914 to 1918 the German armies fought a coalition of almost the entire world, which had refused Germany the place under the sun her growing population required. In spite of their numerical superiority, the Allies never defeated the German armies in battle but they did succeed in blinding a section of the German people with promises of a just peace so that pacifists, socialists, democrats and Jews at home revolted and stabbed the German armies in the back.

At Versailles, Germany was unjustly accused of having been responsible for the war. The Allies imposed upon her a treaty based on this lie which meant the dismemberment and enslavement of the German people. Nevertheless, Germany signed this shameful treaty and did her utmost to fulfill its terms and to re-establish a friendly relationship with her former enemies, believing in their promises to disarm. Germany herself was disarmed and her people toiled in utmost poverty and misery to fulfill their obligations toward the victors. On a pretext, France occupied the Ruhr, Germany's center of industrial production, establishing a regime of terror to enforce the unfulfillable clauses of the treaty. German economic life was disrupted and the country was plunged into an inflation which destroyed all the savings of the German population. Yet Germany accepted the Locarno treaties, guaranteeing once and for all her western frontiers, and entered the League. Germany signed the Kellogg Pact and outlawed war as an instrument of national policy. She insisted that the other parties keep their promises to disarm but they refused to do so. The chains of the Versailles Treaty became unbearable. The Allied powers refused to give Germany equality, a fair share in world trade, colonies and markets in central and southern Europe. Unemployment grew and misery reached unprecedented depths. Communism was spreading and it looked as if Germany would disintegrate, the German people be enslaved forever. During these desperate years, a savior arose who filled the German people with new hope, rallied them to his banner and promised work, bread, progress, strength for resurrection. The German people, by their own will power, liberated themselves from the chains of the Versailles Treaty, restored

## *Manifestoes for Tomorrow*

their own sovereignty by remilitarizing the German Rhineland. As the Allied powers refused to disarm and broke their own pledges, Germany regarded the military clauses of the treaty as null and void and began to assert her own dignity and to rearm. It was impossible for sixty-five million people to live in such a small and poor country. They needed living space if peace was to be preserved. The separation of German Austria from the Reich was ended and the German peoples were at last united. The new Germany gave work to everybody, spread wealth and happiness in the land and created a prosperity, a period of building and construction, unprecedented in German history. The German nation could not tolerate the spreading of Bolshevism in Europe and at great sacrifice helped the Spanish people to exterminate this Asiatic threat. As Germany arose from her defeat and was again a great, independent power, she could no longer admit the intolerable oppression and persecution of her blood brethren in Czechoslovakia. Relying on the righteousness of her cause, she claimed incorporation of the Sudeten German territories in the Reich which the former enemies of Germany were made to accept without force. But the enemies of peace had learned nothing. The Poles refused to stop oppressing and torturing German minorities and to allow their return to the German Reich. So Germany, to protect and defend her peoples, was forced to act. To prove her pacific intentions, she signed a treaty of nonaggression with Soviet Russia and liberated the lost German territories in the East. England and France, who for a long time were jealously watching Germany's resurrection, took advantage of her pacification of the East and declared war on the Reich without any provocation and with

the clear intention of once again destroying and enslaving the German people. Germany had no quarrel with her western neighbors. So, although the Western world was fully mobilized and menaced German soil, Germany did not undertake any action but waited in the hope of a reasonable settlement with England and France. A few months later, however, it was obvious that England was planning to violate Danish and Norwegian neutrality in order to outflank German defenses from the north. The Wehrmacht had to intervene and protect the neutrality of Denmark and Norway. Shortly thereafter, British invasion of Belgium and Holland and the outflanking of the Westwall was threatening. No more time could be wasted. Germany had to strike in self-defense. The Wehrmacht attacked and in a few days achieved the greatest military victory of all times. Belgium and Holland were occupied, the British pushed back into the sea and France was brought to capitulation. In Compiègne, the Fuehrer avenged once and for all the German humiliation of 1918. Again Germany appealed to England to save the peace of the world, guaranteeing the integrity of the British Empire in exchange for British recognition of German *Lebensraum* in Europe. Britain stubbornly refused and began to bomb German cities in violation of civilized warfare. Germany was forced to retaliate. She had to strike at British harbors and military targets and to stop deliveries of arms to England by torpedoing British convoys. The Anti-Comintern Pact, which united the anti-Bolshevik forces of the new order, and the German-Russian nonaggression pact, kept peace in the East. But intelligence reports made it more and more obvious that Soviet Russia was using the Russo-German pact merely to gain time and was secretly

## *The Anatomy of Peace*

arming to the utmost of her ability. Russia was making preparations for an attack on Germany at a moment most convenient for her. Naturally, Germany could not expose herself to such mortal danger. She had to forestall Bolshevik treachery. With a lightning decision—characteristic of the intuition of the Fuehrer—Germany, in self-defense, struck at her foe. Her armies marched against the Soviet Union in order to prevent Bolshevik aggression and to destroy the Red Army, the greatest threat to European civilization. . . .

And from the vantage point of *Moscow*, the same quarter century appeared in this light:

In 1917, the Russian people succeeded in overthrowing the autocratic dynasty which had oppressed and enslaved them for centuries, and established a socialist people's republic. The capitalist powers, the allies of czarist Russia, intervened militarily. America, England, France, Poland sent troops into Russia to destroy the new republic and to re-establish the old regime of exploitation. The rapidly organized Red Army fought heroically, defeated the invaders and liberated the Russian soil. However, the young Soviet forces were not yet strong enough to push the armies of the capitalist imperialists back to the prewar frontier and so the Soviet government, in order to secure peace the quickest possible way, accepted a settlement which meant a loss of Russia's Baltic and western provinces. In spite of this settlement imposed on the Russian people, the hostility of the outside world toward the socialist experiment of the Soviet Union continued. Russia finally emerged from her involuntary isolation after five years by signing a treaty in Rapallo with the other prostrate power, Germany. Russia needed machinery, tools, engineers to build up her industries and

to raise the material conditions of her peoples, and Germany was prepared to do business with her. The Soviet Union bought everything for cash and paid in gold, so very soon England and America also began to sell their products in exchange for Russian gold. But the U.S.S.R. did not succeed in breaking the political hostility of the capitalist world. It became more and more obvious that the success of the Communist economic system aroused great apprehensions abroad and that the capitalist, imperialist countries would attack and destroy the Soviet Union at the earliest opportunity. All the neighboring countries—Finland, the Baltic States, Poland, Rumania, Turkey, the British Empire, Japan—were openly defying the Soviet Union and following an anti-Soviet policy. So Russia had to postpone her great plan to produce consumer goods in mass quantities and was forced by circumstances to build up key industries in order to construct factories for armament production, and to organize a land army and an air force of huge proportions to defend the Union. The more powerful the U.S.S.R. became, the more resentment and animosity grew in capitalist countries. The friends of the Soviet people, the Communists, were persecuted everywhere. A new type of military imperialism, Fascism, was seizing power in one country after the other, intent upon destroying socialist Russia. When Fascism came into power in Germany and mobilized the great German industrial potential for war against Russia, the Soviet government tried to come to an agreement with the Western democratic nations who were also threatened by the growing German militarism. The Soviet Union entered the League of Nations and worked with all her might for the establishment of a system of col-

## *Manifestoes for Tomorrow*

lective security, for a system of alliances of the peace-loving nations, to make peace indivisible and to check aggression collectively whenever and wherever it started. Soon a Fascist aggression occurred. Italy attacked Ethiopia. But all the powers hesitated, temporized and appeased the aggressor, leaving Russia isolated in her fight for collective security. For several years, the Soviet Union passionately continued trying to organize the world for peace, advocating co-operation of the democratic, socialist and Communist forces in all countries to keep Fascism from spreading and to prevent aggression. America was inaccessible. England and France clearly did not want to align themselves formally with Soviet Russia against the Fascist forces. It became increasingly apparent that they would welcome a Fascist attack on the Soviet Union, that they would like to see the German people and their satellites engaged with the Soviet people in a long and bloody struggle. The Soviet government, desiring peace and knowing how disastrous such a war would be for the Soviet people, watched these maneuvers and manifestations of ill will with growing apprehension. They did their utmost to persuade the Western democracies of the suicidal shortsightedness of their policy. Finally, when Munich came and Britain and France, without even consulting the Soviet Union, sacrificed Czechoslovakia on the altar of appeasement, and permitted the destruction of the most valuable military link between Russia and the West, the situation became acute. A decision had to be made. Britain and France were invited to Moscow for conferences, but they sent only third-rate negotiators, affronting the Soviet government. Those negotiations left no doubt that even then, the Western powers did not desire

wholehearted collaboration with Russia. They accepted the point of view of the Polish Fascists who refused to grant the Red Army permission to advance to the Polish-German border to organize common defenses. Then and there, it was clear that the arrangement suggested to the Soviet Union by the Western powers had no practical meaning and that it would inevitably result in a clash between the German and Russian armies with terrible bloodshed and serious consequences for the Soviet Union. To prevent such a catastrophe, the Soviet government had to make a decision. A radical change had to be made in past policy. They accepted a German proposal for a nonaggression pact which guaranteed the Soviet frontiers and peace, at least for a certain time, between the German Reich and the U.S.S.R. After signing the pact, the German armies attacked Poland. The Polish armies—on which the Western powers had wanted to base their entire Eastern defenses—collapsed in a few days. The Polish state ceased to exist. To prevent the Nazi militarists from reaching the Soviet borders, Red Army units reoccupied the lands inhabited by Ukrainians and White Russians which had been stolen from them by Poland during the revolution when the Soviet Union was weak. Through this act of foresight the German armies were stopped at a safe distance from the heart of Russia, and the Anti-Comintern Pact, the alliance between Germany, Japan and their satellites, against the Soviet Union was neutralized. Shortly after, Soviet diplomacy was justified when Germany attacked the West, defeating the French and British armies, and established Nazi hegemony over the entire European Continent, except the Soviet Union. One year later, the German Fascists unmasked their

## *The Anatomy of Peace*

aggressive imperialism. Hitler violated his pact with Moscow and attacked the Soviet Union. By that time, however, the Russian armies were in readiness and defense industries were working to full capacity far behind the front lines. As a result of German aggression against the Soviet Union, the U.S.S.R. became the ally of the British Empire and, later, of the United States. All these tragic events prove how correct was Russia's foreign policy, how justified her admonitions to the democratic world in the prewar years. But they also show that the U.S.S.R. must constantly be alert and prepared in the face of intrigues and aggressions of any of the foreign countries. In a world of hostile powers, the Soviet Union will have to maneuver between them and accept the alliances of those who will align themselves with her against the power or powers which represent the most imminent danger to the Soviet motherland.

The dramatic and strange events between the two world wars could be just as well described from the point of view of any other nation, large or small. From Tokyo or Warsaw, from Riga or Rome, from Prague or Budapest, each picture will be entirely different and, from the fixed national point of observation, it will always be indisputably and unchallengeably correct. And the citizens of every country will be at all times convinced—and rightly so—of the infallibility of their views and the objectivity of their conclusions.

It is surely obvious that agreement, or common understanding, between different nations, basing their relations on such a primitive method of judgment, is an absolute impossibility. A picture of the world pieced together like a mosaic from its

various national components is a picture that never, and under no circumstances can have any relation to reality, unless we deny that such a thing as reality exists.

The world and history cannot be as they appear to the different nations, unless we disavow objectivity, reason and scientific methods of research.

But if we believe that man is, to a certain degree, different from the animal and that he is endowed with a capacity for phenomenological thinking, then the time has come to realize that our inherited method of observation in political and social matters is childishly primitive, hopelessly inadequate and thoroughly wrong. If we want to try to create at least the beginning of orderly relations between nations, we must try to arrive at a more scientific, more objective method of observation, without which we shall never be able to see social and political problems as they really are, nor to perceive their incidence. And without a correct diagnosis of the disease, there is no hope for a cure.

Our political and social thinking today is passing through a revolutionary era very much the same as were astronomy and abstract science during the Renaissance.

For more than fourteen centuries, the geocentric theory of the universe, formulated and laid down by Ptolemy in the second century A.D. in Alexandria, was paramount in the scientific world. According to this theory—as explained in Ptolemy's famous *Almagest*, the culmination of Greek astronomy—the earth was the center of the universe around which revolved the sun, the moon and all the stars.

No matter how primitive such a conception of the universe appears to us today, it remained unchallenged and unchallengeable for fourteen hundred years. All pos-



## *Manifestoes for Tomorrow*

sible experimentation and observation before the sixteenth century A.D., confirmed the Ptolemaic system as a rock of indisputable scientific truth.

Strangely enough, Greek scientists several centuries before Ptolemy had a concept of the universe far more advanced and nearer to our modern knowledge. As far back as the sixth century B.C., Pythagoras visualized the earth and the universe as being spherical in shape. One of his later disciples, Aristarchus of Samos, in the third century B.C., in his hypothesis deposed the earth as the center of the universe, and declared it to be a "planet," like the many other celestial bodies. This system, called the Pythagorean system, plainly anticipated the Copernican hypothesis nineteen centuries later. It was probably not completely developed by Pythagoras himself, but it had been known several hundred years before Ptolemy.

Yet for almost two thousand years following the first insight into the real construction and functioning of the universe, people were convinced that all the celestial bodies revolved around the earth, which was the fixed center of the universe.

The geocentric system worked perfectly as long as it could solve all the problems which presented themselves under the then existing methods of observation. Ptolemy himself appears to have sensed and suspected the transitory character of his system, as in his *Syntaxis* he laid down the general principle that in seeking to explain phenomena, we should adopt the simplest possible hypothesis, *provided it is not contradicted in any important respect by observation.*

The geocentric theory of Ptolemy was perfectly in harmony with the religious dogma concerning the story of the creation of the universe as told in the Bible and

it became the doctrine approved by the Church.

But in fifteenth century Italy, under the light of new learning and observation and under the impetus of the revolt against the dictatorship of accepted philosophical and scientific doctrines, there came a radical change. Several thinkers, particularly one Dominico Maria Novara, denounced the Ptolemaic system and began spreading "Pythagorean opinions"—as they were called—about the universe. Around 1500, these old yet revolutionary ideas attracted and deeply interested young Copernicus while he was studying at the universities of Bologna and Padua.

So new circumstances, new methods of observation, new needs led to the birth of the Copernican system, one of the most gigantic steps of scientific progress in human history.

Through the Copernican system, man's outlook on the universe changed fundamentally. In this new concept, the earth itself rotated. It was no longer a stable point. Our globe, just like the other planets, revolved in space around the sun and the new theory of planetary movement was founded on the principle of relativity of motion.

This heliocentric theory of Copernicus was by no means perfect. It solved many problems the Ptolemaic system could not solve, but certain outstanding anomalies compromised its harmonious working. It is also well known that for thirty-five years Copernicus did not dare publicly proclaim his discovery. When he finally decided to publish it (in the year of his death) he called his theory "Hypothesis" to forestall the wrath of the Church and public opinion.

The later experience of Galileo proved

## *The Anatomy of Peace*

how justified were the fears of Copernicus. The heliocentric theory was not only condemned by the church authorities as heresy; it was rejected by the greatest astronomers and other scientists of the time. Indeed, it was impossible to prove Copernicus' hypothesis by the then existing methods of observation. Only later, through the work of Kepler and Galileo, was the heliocentric theory put on a solid scientific foundation.

At its inception, the Copernican system was nothing more than a daring speculation. But it opened a new world, pointed out the road to science and prompted new and more refined methods of observation which finally led to general acceptance of the revolutionary but correct outlook on the universe.

During the first half of the twentieth century, in so far as our political, social and economic thinking is concerned, we find ourselves in the same dead-end road as Copernicus during the Jubilee of 1500.

We are living in a geocentric world of nation-states. We look upon economic, social and political problems as "national" problems. No matter in which country we live, the center of our political universe is our own nation. In our outlook, the immovable point around which all the other nations, all the problems and events outside our nation, the rest of the world, supposedly rotate, is—our nation.

This is our basic and fundamental dogma.

According to this nation-centric conception of world affairs, we can solve political, economic and social problems within our nation, the fixed, immutable center, in one way—through law and government. And in the circumambient world around us, in our relations with the peoples of other na-

tions, these same problems should be treated by other means—by "policy" and "diplomacy."

According to this nation-centric conception of world affairs, the political, social and economic relations between man and man living within a sovereign national unit, and these very same relationships between man and man living in separate sovereign national units are qualitatively different and require two qualitatively different methods of handling.

For many centuries such an approach was unchallenged and unchallengeable. It served to solve current problems in a satisfactory way and the existing methods of production, distribution, of communications and of interchange among the nations did not necessitate nor justify the formulation and acceptance of a different outlook. But the scientific and technological developments achieved by the industrial revolution in one century have brought about in our political outlook and in our approach to political and social phenomena a change as inevitable and imperative as the Renaissance brought about in our philosophical outlook.

The developments creating that need are revolutionary and without parallel in human history. In one century, the population of this earth has been more than trebled. Since the very beginning of recorded history, for ten thousand years, communication was based on animal power. During the American and French revolutions, transportation was scarcely faster than it had been under the Pharaohs, at the time of Buddha or of the Incas. And then, after a static aeon of ten thousand years, transportation changed within a single short century from animal power to the steam and electric railroad, the internal

## *Manifestoes for Tomorrow*

combustion automobile and the six hundred-mile-per-hour jet propulsion plane.

After thousands of years of primitive, rural existence in which all human beings, with few exceptions, were exhausted from producing with their own hands just enough food, clothing and shelter for sheer survival, in less than one century the population of the entire Western world has become consumers of mass-production commodities.

The change created by industrialism is so revolutionary, so profound, that it is without parallel in the history of any civilization. Despite Spengler, it is unique.

In this new and as yet unexplored era we find ourselves completely helpless, equipped with the inadequate, primitive political and social notions inherited from the pre-industrialized world. Slowly we are coming to realize that none of our accepted theories is satisfactory to cope with the disturbing and complex problems of today.

We realize that although we can have all the machinery we need, we cannot solve the problems of production. We realize that in spite of the far-flung and tremendous scope of transportation, we cannot prevent famine and starvation in many places, while there is abundance elsewhere on the earth. We realize that although hundreds of millions are desperately in need of food and industrial products, we cannot prevent mass unemployment. We realize that even though we have mined more gold than ever before, we cannot stabilize currency. We realize that while every modern country needs raw materials that other countries have, and produces goods which other countries need, we have been unable to organize a satisfactory method of exchange. We realize that al-

though the overwhelming majority of all people hate violence and long to live in peace, we cannot prevent recurrent and increasingly devastating world wars. We knew that armaments must lead to wars between nations, but we have learned the bitter truth that disarmament also leads to war.

In this confusion and chaos in which civilized nations are struggling with utter helplessness, we are bound to arrive at the inevitable conclusion that the cause of this hopelessness and helplessness lies not in the outer world but in ourselves. Not in the problems we have to solve but in the hypotheses with which we approach their solutions.

Our political and social conceptions are Ptolemaic.

The world in which we live is Copernican.

Our Ptolemaic political conceptions in a Copernican industrial world are bankrupt. Latest observations on ever-changing conditions have made our Ptolemaic approach utterly ridiculous and out-of-date. We still believe, in each one of the seventy or eighty sovereign states, that our "nation" is the immovable center around which the whole world revolves.

There is not the slightest hope that we can possibly solve any of the vital problems of our generation until we rise above dogmatic nation-centric conceptions and realize that, in order to understand the political, economic and social problems of this highly integrated and industrialized world, we have to shift our standpoint and see all the nations and national matters in motion, in their interrelated functions, rotating according to the same laws without any fixed points created by our own imagination for our own convenience.

# *The Anatomy of Peace*

## CHAPTER XII

### *Fallacy of Self-determination of Nations*

DURING the second World War, Wilson has often been blamed for a series of grave errors of procedure, for not handling the situation properly after the first World War. Others, defending Wilson, say that the League of Nations failed, not because of any mistake Wilson made, but because the nations composing the League did not live up to the obligations they assumed.

Those who criticize Wilson's actions say that he made a great mistake in not taking a representative committee of American Senators with him to the peace conference in Paris. Had leading members of the Foreign Relations Committee of the United States Senate participated in the negotiations preceding the Versailles Treaty, the Senate would have ratified the Covenant. Had America become a member of the League, the argument continues, the second World War would never have broken out.

By taking to Paris a delegation with only one Republican, who was neither a Senator nor prominent in the party, Wilson offended the Senate and the Republican party, with the result that the treaty was not ratified. To avoid a repetition of that tragedy, this time representatives of both parties in the Senate should participate in drafting the new world organization.

Wilson is also blamed for having insisted upon the inclusion of the Covenant of the League in the Treaty of Versailles. So the conclusion is drawn that this time we should set up the world organization separately from the peace arrangements.

Wilson insisted on the equality of nations, members of the League. As that principle did not work, we are now to have

a league dominated by the great powers, who actually *are* responsible for keeping the peace.

Wilson insisted that the coalition created by the war, the Allied and Associated Powers, be dissolved after the cessation of hostilities and that the new League take over the settlement of all further problems and disputes, including the application of the peace treaties. That method having failed, the grand alliance created by the war is to be maintained and the proposed world organization to have nothing to do with the peace settlement or with the conditions imposed upon the defeated enemy countries.

Wilson insisted upon general disarmament. At that program proved ineffective to maintain peace, this time the great powers are to remain armed to prevent any further aggression and protect the peace.

Wilson insisted on immediate settlement after the cessation of hostilities. Now we are to postpone political, territorial and economic decisions and make special transitional arrangements before we discuss "final" settlements.

Thus goes the dispute. Arguments and more arguments are adduced, blaming the failure of Wilson on the opposition of "bad men," on the secret treaties of the Allies, on the mistake he made by going to Europe personally, on the fact that he took principles and no plans to Paris, on his stubbornness in dealing with the Senate between February 14 and March 13, 1919, when he was back in Washington, and so forth.

All these arguments criticizing Wilson's acts and policies are entirely superficial.

## *Manifestoes for Tomorrow*

None of them even approaches the core of the problem.

Should we reverse our policy and apply methods and procedures the exact opposite of Wilson's methods and procedures, without changing the fundamentals of our approach to the problem, the result would be exactly the same.

If a new covenant for a world organization were unanimously accepted in advance by the United States Senate; if we made a just peace with the enemies of the United Nations; if we maintained the grand alliance to enforce the postwar settlements; if we created a world organization of all "peace-loving" nations with the United States and the U.S.S.R. participating; if the great military powers maintained heavy armaments to prevent "aggressions"; if the great powers were charged by the proposed world organization to maintain and enforce peace with their armed might—in brief, if we followed a procedure diametrically opposed to the procedure of 1919, the result would be the same: another world war in a short time.

We shall never learn the lessons of the swift and complete collapse of the 1919 world order, if we confine ourselves to formal and superficial discussions of method and policy.

Less wide of the mark, though altogether fallacious, is the view that the League and the world order of 1919 crumbled, not because of any errors committed in 1919 nor because of any weakness of the League, but because the nations refused to fulfill their Covenant and failed to act at critical moments as they had promised and were supposed to act.

So at the end of the second World War, we find statesmen asserting that the 1919 world structure failed because the ideals

and principles of Wilson were abandoned. According to them, there was nothing whatever wrong with the underlying principles upon which that order was erected.

The historic fact is that the second World War came about, not because Wilson's doctrines were not carried out, but because they were!

If we wish to avert further disappointments and another major catastrophe, we must try to understand the essential errors and fundamental fallacies of Wilson's ideas.

Although there are a few indications that Wilson did aim at the establishment of a "sovereignty of mankind," his ideas as laid down in the Fourteen Points, Four Principles, Four Ends, Five Particulars and finally in the Covenant of the League, all point most distinctly in an opposite direction.

The basic thought of Wilson was that every nation and every people is entitled to self-government, political independence and self-determination and that a league of independent and sovereign nations should guarantee the independence and sovereignty of each and every nation.

In the eighteenth century this would have been a feasible conception. But in the twentieth century such an oversimplified and superficial solution was bound to lead to total anarchy in international relations. This conception clearly demonstrates that Wilson, his associates in the creation of the 1919 world order and all the millions who today seek solutions along the same lines, are unable to clarify the confusion in their minds as to elementary social and political principles.

Self-determination of the nations is a Ptolemaic conception.

Self-determination is an anachronism. It asserts the sacred right of every nation to

## *The Anatomy of Peace*

do as it pleases within its own frontiers, no matter how monstrous or how harmful to the rest of the world. It asserts that every aggregation of peoples has a sacred right to split itself into smaller and ever smaller units, each sovereign in its own corner. It assumes that the extension of economic or political influence through ever-larger units along centralized interdependent lines is, in itself, unjust.

Because this ideal once held good—in a larger, simpler, less integrated world—it has a terrific emotional appeal. It can be used and is being used by more and more politicians, writers, agitators, in slogans calling for the “end of imperialism,” the “abolition of the colonial system,” “independence” for this and that racial or territorial group.

The present world chaos did not come upon us because this or that nation had not yet achieved total political independence. It will not be relieved in the slightest by creating more sovereign units or by dismembering interdependent aggregations like the British Empire that have shown a capacity for economic and political advancement. On the contrary, the disease now ravaging our globe would be intensified, since it is in large measure the direct result of the myth of total political independence in a world of total economic and social interdependence.

If the world is to be made a tolerable place to live in, if we are to obtain surcease from war, we must forget our emotional attachment to the eighteenth century ideal of absolute nationalism. Under modern conditions it can only breed want, fear, war and slavery.

The truth is that the passion for national independence is a leftover from a dead past. This passion has destroyed the freedom of many nations. No period in history

saw the organization of so many independent states as that following the war of 1919. Within two decades nationalism has devoured its children—all those new nations were conquered and enslaved, along with a lot of old nations. It was, let us hope, the last desperate expression of an ideal made obsolete by new conditions, the last catastrophic attempt to squeeze the world into a political pattern that had lost its relevance.

Quite certainly, independence is a deep-rooted political ideal of every group of men, be it family, religion, association or nation.

If there were only one single nation on earth, the independence of its people could very well be achieved by its right to self-determination, by its right to choose the form of government and the social and economic order it desired, by its right to absolute sovereignty.

Such absolute national self-determination might still guarantee independence if in all the world there were only two or three self-sufficient nations, separated from each other by wide spaces, having no close political, economic or cultural contact with each other.

But once there are *many* nations whose territories are cheek by jowl, who have extensive cultural and religious ties and interdependent economic systems, who are in permanent relations by the exchange of goods, services and persons, then the ideal of self-determination—of each nation having the absolute right to choose the form of government, the economic and social systems it wishes, of each having the right to untrammelled national sovereignty—becomes a totally different proposition.

The behavior of each self-determined national unit is no longer the exclusive con-

## *Manifestoes for Tomorrow*

cern of the inhabitants of that unit. It becomes equally the concern of the inhabitants of other units. What the sovereign state of one self-determined nation may consider to the interest and welfare of its own people, may be detrimental to the interests and welfare of other nations. Whatever countermeasures the other self-determined sovereign nations may take to defend the interests of their respective nationals, equally affect the peoples of all other national sovereign units.

This interplay of action and reaction of the various sovereign states completely defeats the purpose for which the sovereign nation-states were created, if that purpose was to safeguard the freedom, independence and self-determination of their peoples.

They are no longer sovereign in their decisions and courses of action. To a very large extent they are obliged to act the way they do by circumstances existing in other sovereign units, and are unable to protect and guarantee the independence of their populations.

Innumerable examples can be cited to prove that, although maintaining the fiction of independence and sovereignty, no present-day nation-state is independent and sovereign in its decisions. Instead, each has become the shuttlecock of decisions and actions taken by other nation-states.

The United States of America, so unwilling to yield one iota of its national sovereignty, categorically refusing to grant the right to any world organization to interfere with the sovereign privilege of Congress to decide upon war and peace, was in 1941 forced into war by a decision made exclusively by the Imperial War Council in Tokyo. To insist that the declaration of war by Congress following the attack on

Pearl Harbor was a "sovereign act" is the most naïve kind of hairsplitting.

Nor was the entrance of the Soviet Union into the second World War decided by the sovereign authorities of the U.S.S.R. War was forced upon the Soviet Union by a sovereign decision made in Berlin.

The failure of national sovereignty to express self-determination and independence is just as great in the economic field, where every new production method, every new tariff system, every new monetary measure, compels other nation-states to take counter-measures which it would be childish to describe as sovereign acts on the part of the seventy-odd sovereign, self-determined nation-states.

The problem, far from being new and insoluble, is as old as life itself.

Families are entirely free to do many things they want to do. They can cook what they like. They can furnish their home as they please. They can educate their children as they see fit. But in a Christian country no man can marry three women at the same time, no man living in an apartment house can set fire to his dwelling, keep a giant crocodile as a pet or hide a murderer in his flat. If a person does these or similar things, he is arrested and punished.

Is he a free man or is he not?

Clearly, he is absolutely free to do everything he wants in all matters which concern himself and his family alone. But he is not free to interfere with the freedom and safety of others. His freedom of action is not absolute. It is limited by law. Some things he can do only according to established regulations, others he is forbidden to do altogether.

The problems created by the ideal of self-determination of nations are exactly the

## *The Anatomy of Peace*

same as the problems created by the freedom of individuals or families. Each nation can and should remain entirely free to do just as it pleases in local and cultural affairs, or in matters where their actions are of purely local and internal consequence and can have no effect upon the freedom of others. But self-determination of a nation in military matters, in the fields of economic and foreign affairs, where the behavior of each nation immediately and directly influences the freedom and safety of all the other nations, creates a situation in which self-determination is neutralized and destroyed.

There is nothing wrong with the ideal of self-determination.

But there is something very wrong indeed with the ideal of "self-determination of nations."

This concept means that the population of this small world is to be divided into eighty or a hundred artificial units, based on such arbitrary and irrational criteria as race, nationality, historical antecedents, etc. This concept would have us believe that the democratic ideal of self-determination can be guaranteed and safeguarded by granting people the right of self-determination within their national groups, without giving corporate expression of self-determination to the aggregate of the groups.

Such a system can preserve self-determination of the people only so long as their national units can live an isolated life. Since the nations today *are* in contact, with their economic and political lives closely interwoven, their independence needs higher forms of expression, stronger institutions for defense. In absolute interpretation, the many self-determined national units cancel out each other's self-determination.

What was the use of the "self-determination of Lithuania" when self-determined Poland occupied Vilna? And what was the use of "Polish self-determination" when self-determined Germany destroyed Poland? Unquestionably, self-determination of nations does not guarantee freedom and independence to a people, because it has no power to prevent the effects of actions committed by *other* self-determined nations. If we regard the freedom and self-determination of peoples as our ideal, we must do our utmost to avoid repeating the mistakes of 1919 and realize that "*self-determination of nations*" is today the insurmountable obstacle to "*self-determination of the people*."

Nobody realized the dangers of the predominating forces of our age better and sooner than Winston Churchill. In an article, published in the United States in February, 1930, he wrote:

"The Treaty of Versailles represents the apotheosis of nationalism. The slogan of self-determination has been carried into practical effect. The Treaties of Versailles and Trianon, whatever their faults, were deliberately designed to be a consummation of that national feeling which grew out of the ruins of despotism, whether benevolent or otherwise, just as despotism grew out of the ruins of feudalism. All the inherent life thirst of liberalism in this sphere has been given full play. Europe is organized as it never was before, upon a purely nationalistic basis. But what are the results? Nationalism throughout Europe, for all its unconquerable explosive force, has already found and will find its victorious realization at once unsatisfying and uncomfortable. More than any other world movement, it is fated to find victory bitter. It is a religion whose field of proselytizing



## *Manifestoes for Tomorrow*

is strictly limited and when it has conquered its own narrow world, it is debarred, if it has no longer aim, by its own dogmas from seeking new worlds to conquer."

And, after a brilliant analysis of the fallacy of a world order based on absolute national sovereignty, and on the ideal of national self-determination, Churchill concluded, in 1930:

"No one can suppose that this is going to last."

It did not last. But the emotional hold of these eighteenth century nationalist ideals are all-powerful in the minds of our national statesman. A decade later, the same Winston Churchill, as Prime Minister and the unforgettable and unchallenged leader of the democratic forces against totalitarianism, proclaimed the very same principles of consummated nationalism and self-determination as the foundation upon which the coming world order was once again to be built—the very principles which ten years before he so correctly recognized as futile and their victory unsatisfying and bitter.

The aggregation of acts in every possible combination and permutation—the product of the self-determination of all sovereign nation-states—creates an inextricable network of effects and counter-effects, within which the ideal of independence becomes ridiculous.

In a small interrelated and interdependent world, it is obvious that the ideals of independence and self-determination are relative notions. Independence and self-determination can exist in fact only as an optimum, can be achieved only through the regulation of the interrelations of the self-determined sovereign units.

The Polish people would have been in-

dependent and would have had self-determination to a much higher degree than was actually assured them by the sovereign Polish Republic, had certain attributes of Polish national sovereignty been limited, restricted and integrated into a higher sovereign institution, provided that the sovereignty of the German state had been equally limited, restricted and integrated. The first criterion of independence and self-determination is the ability to guarantee freedom against aggression and destruction by outside forces. Today the institutions of the sovereign nation-state are patently incapable of fulfilling that task.

The Covenant of the League of Nations was based entirely on the principles of national sovereignty, of national self-determination, on the right of every nation to do as it pleased within the boundaries of its national state. The Covenant was built upon the assumption that peace between such sovereign nation-states could be maintained by providing a place for the representatives of these sovereign units to meet and discuss their relationship, and the machinery to handle the problems arising between them.

This was a purely formal and unrealistic conception which did not even recognize the existence of the crucial problem of human society that must be solved, the evident and apparent causes that lead to conflicts and to wars between the nations. With such complete lack of understanding of the nature of international conflicts, with such basically erroneous notions as to the essence of group relationship, Wilsonism and its creation, the League, was bound to fail, no matter what policies, what procedure, what tactics, were pursued by its founders, no matter what attitudes were adopted by its member states.

# *The Anatomy of Peace*

from CHAPTER XV

## *Law . . . Conquest*

Our Laws and Statutes are inherited  
From generation to generation,  
And spread slowly from place to place  
Like a disease that has no end.  
Reason to folly, blessings to curses  
Turn. Woe be to us! Heirs of all the Past,  
For to our Birthrights, born with us,  
No one gives heed! . . . No one, alas!

(GOETHE: *Faust*)

THE PROBLEM of our twentieth century crisis, seemingly so vastly complex and inextricable with its hundreds of national, territorial, religious, social, economic, political and cultural riddles, can be reduced to a few simple propositions.

1. From the teachings of history we have learned that conflicts and wars between social units are inevitable whenever and wherever groups of men with equal sovereignty come into contact.

2. Whenever and wherever social units in any field, regardless of size and character, have come into contact and the resulting friction has led to war, we have learned that these conflicts have always ceased after some part of the sovereignty of the warring units was transferred to a higher social unit able to create legal order, a government authority under which the previously warring groups became equal members of a broader society and within which conflicts between groups could be controlled and eradicated by legal means without the use of force.

3. From the experience thus gained we know that within any given group of individuals in contact and communication with each other, conflict is inevitable whenever and wherever sovereign power resides in the individual members or groups of

members of society, and not in society itself.

4. We further know that, irrespective of the immediate and apparent causes of conflict among warring groups, these causes ceased producing wars and violent conflicts only through the establishment of a legal order, only when the social groups in conflict were subjected to a superior system of law, and that, in all cases and at all times, the effect of such a superior system of law has been the cessation of the use of violence among the previously warring groups.

5. Knowing that wars between nonintegrated social groups in contact are inevitable, that the coexistence of nonintegrated sovereign social groups always and in all cases has led to wars, we must realize that peace among men, among individuals, or among groups of individuals in any sphere, is the result of legal order. Peace is identical with the existence of law.

6. As the twentieth century crisis is a world-wide clash between the social units of sovereign nation-states, the problem of peace in our time is the establishment of a legal order to regulate relations among men, beyond and above the nation-states. This requires transferring parts of the sovereign authority of the existing warring national institutions to universal institutions capable of creating law and order in human relations beyond and above the nation-states.

These propositions are merely the reduction into elementary formulas of one long line of events in our history. The task before us is nothing unique. It is one step

## *Manifestoes for Tomorrow*

further in the same direction, the next step in our evolution.

That conditions in our present society make it imperative for us to undertake this step without further delay should by now be clear to everybody.

Within a single generation, two world wars have ravaged mankind, interfered with peaceful progress and disrupted the free, democratic way of life of the entire Western world. In spite of the desire of the overwhelming majority of the peoples to live and work in peace, we have been unable to escape war. For more than three decades, we have been witnessing an unprecedented decay and downfall of our civilization.

To wage this stupendous struggle, we have had to submit to a hitherto unknown degree of privation, persecution, degradation, suffering, and have been forced to change drastically our civilized way of life. The great majority of the entire human race has been subjected to regimentation, dictation, fear, serfdom.

Considering this world-shaking catastrophe which directly affects every home and every individual,

We believe that the progress of science and industry have rendered national authorities powerless to safeguard the people against armed aggression or to prevent devastating wars.

We believe that peace in any country of the world cannot be maintained without the existence of an effective universal government organization to prevent crime in the inter-national field.

We believe that independence of a nation does not mean untrammelled and unrestricted freedom to do whatever it wants, and that real independence can be created only if no nation is free to attack another, to drag it into war, and to cause such dev-

astating loss of life and wealth as has been wrought twice in our lifetime.

We believe that security of a nation, just as security of an individual, means the co-operation of all to secure the rights of each.

We believe that the relations between nations, just as the relations between individuals in a community, can be peaceful only if based upon and regulated by Law.

We believe that the only way to prevent future world wars is through regulation of the interrelationship of nations, not by unenforceable treaty obligations, which sovereign nations will always disregard, but by an enforceable legal order, binding all nations, giving all nationals equal rights under the established law, and imposing equal obligations upon each.

We believe that peace and security can be established and assured only if we, the sovereign people, who, for our own safety and well-being have delegated parts of our sovereignty to cities to handle our municipal affairs, to departments, counties, provinces, cantons or states to take care of departmental, county, provincial, cantonal or state issues, to our national governments to attend to our national problems—to protect ourselves against the danger of inter-national wars, now delegate part of our respective sovereignty to bodies capable of creating and applying Law in inter-national relations.

We believe that we can protect ourselves against inter-national wars only through the establishment of constitutional life in world affairs, and that such universal Law must be created in conformity with the democratic process, by freely elected and responsible representatives. Creation, application and execution of the Law must be rigorously controlled by the democratic process.

We believe that only a world-wide legal

## *The Anatomy of Peace*

order can insure freedom from fear, and make possible the unhindered development of economic energies for the achievement of freedom from want.

We believe that the natural and inalienable rights of man must prevail. Under twentieth century realities they can be preserved only if they are protected by Law against destruction from outside forces.

In spite of frequent repetitions and parallels, there exist a great number of unique phenomena in human history.

From the beginning of history until our days, until the exploration of the Arctic and Antarctic, people have discovered new continents, new lands, new islands. But this seemingly permanent characteristic of past history is now at an end. The era of geographic discovery is closed. It is almost certain that we know every corner of this globe and that no new lands await the arrival of adventurous navigators. For the first time since man's history has been recorded, we possess our entire globe. Until and unless we are able to communicate with another planet, the theater of human history will be limited to geographically determined, constant and known dimensions.

With this unique and radical change in our geographical and political outlook, expansion, growth, conquest and colonization are no longer possible in virgin territories, but only at each other's expense. During the past five centuries, competition in conquest was possible without necessarily encroaching upon the possessions of other powers, through discovery and annexation of new lands, with occasional naval encounters or local armed skirmishes to discourage a competitor.

This period of history is now over. National security, the urge for conquest, can

be satisfied only by subjugating and appropriating territories and possessions of other nations, thereby destroying their security.

Until today throughout its entire history, the world was too vast to be conquered by a single man or a single power. Technical means have always lagged behind the objective. The world was always too large to be conquered entirely, even by the greatest force. The planet was too elastic, it seemed to grow constantly. Alexander, Caesar, Genghis Khan, the Spaniards, the English, Napoleon—all failed. They all conquered a large part of the world, but never the entire world.

Now only, for the first time in history, the conquest of the world by a single power is a geographic, technical and military possibility.

The world cannot grow any more, it is a known quantity.

As discoveries ended, the growth of the world was suddenly brought to a standstill. Technical developments rapidly caught up and made the globe smaller and smaller. Today the world is completely engulfed by modern industrialism. From a technical and military point of view, the world of today is considerably smaller than was the territory held by any one of the major empires of the past centuries. It is infinitely easier and quicker for the United States to wage war in the Far East than it was for Caesar to do so in Anglia or Egypt.

Modern science has made war a highly mechanized art which can be mastered only by the major industrial powers.

Only three of these will be left.

And any one of the three, by defeating the other two, would conquer and rule the world.

For the first time in human history, *one* power can conquer and rule the world. Indeed but for the industrial potential of the

## *Manifestoes for Tomorrow*

United States, Hitler might have done it! Developments may take a different turn. But technically and militarily, it is a definite possibility.

And politically, it is a definite probability if no legal order is created to satisfy the instinctive desire of peoples for security. A decision upon this crucial issue will probably be reached before the end of the twentieth century.

To put it bluntly, the meaning of the crisis of the twentieth century is that this planet must to some degree be brought under unified control. Our task, our duty, is to attempt to institute this unified control in a democratic way by first proclaiming its principles, and to achieve it by persuasion and with the least possible bloodshed. If we fail to accomplish this, we can be certain that the iron law of history will compel us to wage more and more wars, with more and more powerful weapons, against more and more powerful groups, until unified control is finally attained through conquest.

Political unification of the world by conquest is expensive, painful, bloody. The goal could be achieved so much more easily if it were not for that eternal saboteur of progress—human blindness.

But if it is impossible to cure that blindness and if mankind is unable to face its destiny and to determine by reason and insight the course of our immediate future, if our nationalist dogmatism will not permit us to undertake the organization of a universal legal order, then at least, let us try not to prolong the agony of a decaying, dying system of society.

If we cannot attain to universalism and create union by common consent and democratic methods as a result of rational thinking—then rather than retard the process, let us precipitate unification by conquest. It serves no reasonable purpose to prolong the death throes of our decrepit institutions and to postpone inevitable events only to make the changes more painful and more costly in blood and suffering. It would be better to have done with this operation as quickly as possible so that the fight for the reconquest of lost human liberties can start within the universal state without too much loss of time.

The era of inter-national wars will end, just as everything human ends. It will come to an end with the establishment of universal law to regulate human relationship, either by union or by—conquest.

## APPENDICES



## SOME MODERN NOVELS

- AIKEN, CONRAD: *Blue Voyage* (1927)
- ANDERSON, SHERWOOD: *Winesburg, Ohio* (1919), *Poor White* (1920)
- ASCH, SHOLEM: *The Nazarene* (1939)
- BENNETT, ARNOLD: *The Old Wives' Tale* (1908)
- BOTTOME, PHYLLIS: *The Mortal Storm* (1937)
- BROMFIELD, LOUIS: *The Green Bay Tree* (1924)
- BROWN, HARRY: *A Walk in the Sun* (1945)
- BUCK, PEARL: *The Good Earth* (1931)
- CABELL, JAMES BRANCH: *Jurgen* (1919)
- CALDWELL, ERSKINE: *Tobacco Road* (1932)
- CALDWELL, JANET TAYLOR: *Dynasty of Death* (1938), *The Eagles Gather* (1940)
- CATHER, WILLA: *My Antonia* (1918), *A Lost Lady* (1923)
- COBB, HUMPHREY: *Paths of Glory* (1935)
- CONRAD, JOSEPH: *Lord Jim* (1900), *Victory* (1915), *Under Western Eyes* (1910)
- CUMMINGS, E. E.: *The Enormous Room* (1922)
- DOS PASSOS, JOHN: *The 42nd Parallel* (1930), *1919* (1932), *The Big Money* (1936), *Adventures of a Young Man* (1939)
- DOUGLAS, NORMAN: *South Wind* (1917)
- DREISER, THEODORE: *Sister Carrie* (1900), *An American Tragedy* (1925)
- FALLADA, HANS: *Little Man, What Now?* (1933)
- FARRELL, JAMES T.: *Studs Lonigan* (1935)
- FAULKNER, WILLIAM: *As I Lay Dying* (1930), *Absalom, Absalom!* (1936)
- FITZGERALD, F. SCOTT: *This Side of Paradise* (1920), *The Great Gatsby* (1925), *Tender is the Night* (1934), *The Last Tycoon* (1941)
- FORSTER, E. M.: *The Longest Journey* (1922), *A Passage to India* (1924)
- GALSWORTHY, JOHN: *The Forsyte Saga* (1922), *A Modern Comedy* (1929)
- HAMSUN, KNUT: *Growth of the Soil* (1921)
- HEMINGWAY, ERNEST: *The Sun Also Rises* (1926), *A Farewell to Arms* (1929), *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1940)
- HERGESHEIMER, JOSEPH: *Java Head* (1919)
- HERSEY, JOHN: *A Bell for Adano* (1944)
- HEYWARD, DuBOISE: *Porgy* (1925)
- HUDSON, W. H.: *Green Mansions* (1904)
- HUTCHINSON, R. C.: *Testament* (1938), *The Fire and the Wood* (1941)
- HUXLEY, ALDOUS: *Crome Yellow* (1921), *Antic Hay* (1923), *Point Counter Point* (1928), *Brave New World* (1932, reissued 1946 with author's preface), *Time Must Have a Stop* (1944)
- JOHNSON, JOSEPHINE: *Jordanstown* (1937)
- JOYCE, JAMES: *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916), *Ulysses* (1922)
- KAFKA, FRANZ: *The Trial* (1925), *The Castle* (1926)
- KOESTLER, ARTHUR: *Darkness at Noon* (1942), *Arrival and Departure* (1943)
- LAWRENCE, D. H.: *Sons and Lovers* (1913), *Women in Love* (1919)
- LEWIS, SINCLAIR: *Main Street* (1920), *Babbitt* (1922), *Arrowsmith* (1925)
- MALRAUX, ANDRÉ: *Man's Fate* (1934), *Man's Hope* (1938)
- MANN, THOMAS: *Buddenbrooks* (1901), *The Magic Mountain* (1925), *Young Joseph* (1935)
- MARQUAND, JOHN P.: *The Late George Apley* (1936), *So Little Time* (1943)
- MAUGHAM, SOMERSET: *Of Human Bondage* (1915), *The Moon and Sixpence* (1919), *The Razor's Edge* (1945)
- MORGAN, CHARLES: *The Fountain* (1932), *The Voyage* (1940)
- NATHAN, ROBERT: *One More Spring* (1933), *Road of Ages* (1936)
- NORRIS, FRANK: *The Pit* (1903)
- REMARQUE, ERICH: *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1929)
- SANTAYANA, GEORGE: *The Last Puritan* (1935)
- SAROYAN, WILLIAM: *The Human Comedy* (1943)
- SHOLOKOV, M.: *And Quiet Flows the Don* (1934)



## Appendices

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>SINCLAIR, UPTON: <i>The Jungle</i> (1906)<br/>           STEIN, GERTRUDE: <i>Three Lives</i> (1909)<br/>           STEINBECK, JOHN: <i>Tortilla Flat</i> (1935), <i>Of Mice and Men</i> (1937), <i>The Grapes of Wrath</i> (1939), <i>Cannery Row</i> (1945)<br/>           SWINNERTON, FRANK: <i>Nocturne</i> (1917)<br/>           UNSET, SIGRID: <i>Kristin Lavransdatter</i> (1929)<br/>           WARREN, ROBERT PENN: <i>Night Rider</i> (1939), <i>All the King's Men</i> (1946)<br/>           WELLS, H. G.: <i>Tono-Bungay</i> (1909), <i>The Shape of Things to Come</i> (1933)<br/>           WERFEL, FRANZ: <i>The Forty Days of Musa Dagh</i> (1934)</p> | <p>WESTCOTT, GLENWAY: <i>The Grandmothers</i> (1927)<br/>           WHARTON, EDITH: <i>The House of Mirth</i> (1905), <i>Ethan Frome</i> (1911), <i>The Age of Innocence</i> (1920)<br/>           WILDER, THORNTON: <i>The Bridge of San Luis Rey</i> (1927), <i>The Woman of Andros</i> (1930)<br/>           WOLFE, THOMAS: <i>Look Homeward, Angel</i> (1929), <i>Of Time and the River</i> (1935), <i>You Can't Go Home Again</i> (1940)<br/>           WOOLF, VIRGINIA: <i>Mrs. Dalloway</i> (1925), <i>To the Lighthouse</i> (1927)<br/>           WRIGHT, RICHARD: <i>Native Son</i> (1940)</p> |
|--|---|

## RECORDINGS OF POEMS BY THE POETS

A NUMBER of modern poets can be heard reading their own poems on records. Various companies and services can supply these records, among them Columbia, Decca, Erpi Classroom Films, Inc., Harvard Film Service (4 Lawrence Hall, Cambridge 38, Mass.), HBC, HMV, Musicraft, National Council of Teachers of English, Linguaphone, Timely and Victor.

Among the poets who have recorded their poems are

W. H. Auden	Linguaphone, NCTE
George Barker	Harvard
Stephen Benét	NCTE
R. T. Coffin	Linguaphone, NCTE
E. E. Cummings	HBC and NCTE
Walter de la Mare	HMV #B81778
Richard Eberhart	Harvard
T. S. Eliot	Harvard
J. G. Fletcher	Harvard
Robert Frost	Erpi
Robert Hillyer	Harvard
John Holmes	Harvard
Robinson Jeffers	Harvard
James W. Johnson	Musicraft
Vachel Lindsay	Linguaphone, NCTE
Edwin Markham	Timely
Archibald MacLeish	Linguaphone
Edna Millay	Victor
Carl Sandburg	Decca and Musicraft

# DISTRIBUTION OF SELECTIONS BY TYPES

## ESSAYS

- ADAMS, JAMES TRUSLOW. "Our Changing Characteristics" from *The Tempo of Modern Life*, 189
- ALLEN, FREDERICK LEWIS. "Prelude: May, 1919" and "Back to Normalcy" from *Only Yesterday*, 494
- ANDERSON, SHERWOOD. "Lift Up Thine Eyes," 75
- BEARD, CHARLES A. "Whither Mankind?" from *Whither Mankind?*, 134
- BECKER, CARL L. "Can We Abolish Power Politics and End Imperialism?" from *How New Will the Better World Be?*, 226
- BENEDICT, RUTH, and GENE WELTFISH. *The Races of Mankind*, 175
- BOAS, GEORGE. "In Defense of Machines," 85
- BURKE, KENNETH. "Literature as Equipment for Living" from *The Philosophy of Literary Form*, 373
- CHASE, STUART. "The Technological Imperative" from *The Economy of Abundance*, 198
- COHEN, MORRIS R. "The Future of American Liberalism" from *The Faith of a Liberal*, 860
- COUSINS, NORMAN. "Modern Man Is Obsolete," 881
- EINSTEIN, ALBERT, and RAYMOND SWING. "Einstein on the Atomic Bomb," 141
- HAYAKAWA, S. I. "Reports" from *Language in Action*, 336
- HOUSMAN, A. E. From *The Name and Nature of Poetry*, 346
- JAMES, WILLIAM. "The Moral Equivalent of War" from *Memories and Studies*, 585
- LIPPMAN, WALTER. "The Problem of Unbelief" from *A Preface to Morals*, 123
- "The Moralist in an Unbelieving World" from *A Preface to Morals*, 889
- MAUGHAM, W. SOMERSET. "Writing Prose" from *The Summing Up*, 351
- McFEE, WILLIAM. "The Pattern Makers" from *Swallowing the Anchor*, 361
- MILLIS, WALTER. "The Faith of an American" from *Zero Hour*, 777
- MITCHELL, JOSEPH. "Professor Sea Gull" from *McSorley's Wonderful Saloon*, 708
- ORTEGA Y GASSET, JOSÉ. "The Primitive and the Technical" from *The Revolt of the Masses*, 854
- QUILLER-COUCH, SIR ARTHUR. "On Jargon" from *On the Art of Writing*, 341
- REVES, EMERY. "A Copernican World," "Fallacy of Self-Determination of Nations" and part of "Law . . . Conquest" from *The Anatomy of Peace*, 902
- SOKOLSKY, GEORGE E. "A Conservative Speaks," 209
- SOULE, GEORGE. "Change and the American Tradition" from *The Future of Liberty*, 150
- SPENGLER, OSWALD. "Technics" from *The Decline of the West*, 17
- STEIN, GERTRUDE. "How Writing Is Written," 379
- STIMSON, HENRY L. "The Bomb and the Opportunity," 13
- THURBER, JAMES. "An Outline of Scientists" from *Let Your Mind Alone*, 105
- WELLES, SUMNER. "The Atomic Bomb and World Government," 144
- WHITE, LEE STROUT. "Farewell, My Lovely!" 92
- WRIGHT, RICHARD. "How 'Bigger' Was Born," 326
- WYLIE, PHILIP. "Democracy" from *Generation of Vipers*, 897

## Appendices

### MISCELLANEOUS PROSE

- BLUNDEN, EDMUND. "Memoir of Wilfred Owen" from *Poems of Wilfred Owen*, 471
- CAPETANAKIS, DEMETRIOS. Statement on history, 6
- CONRAD, JOSEPH. "Preface" to *Nigger of the Narcissus*, 370
- Equation for nuclear fission, 5
- FITZGERALD, F. SCOTT. Letter to his daughter, 581
- JEFFERS, ROBINSON. From "Foreword" to *The Selected Poetry of Robinson Jeffers*, 348
- JEFFERSON, THOMAS. "On Natural Aristocracy," 217
- Life. "With his atom-busting cyclotron . . .," 3
- "Rats are driven crazy by insoluble problems," 112
- MACAULAY, THOMAS BABINGTON. "Letter to a Correspondent in America," 220
- MACNEICE, LOUIS. "Foreword" to *Poems 1925-1940*, 347
- MARTINCO, JOHN. "Paris in Panic," 115
- McKELWAY, ST. CLAIR. "The Touchin' Case of Mr. and Mrs. Massa," 172
- New Yorker*, The. "Notes and Comment," 120
- OWEN, WILFRED. "Preface to a Projected Volume of Poems," 477
- ROOSEVELT, FRANKLIN D. Excerpts from two speeches, 16, 150
- SAROYAN, WILLIAM. "Preface" to *The Daring Young Man on the Flying Trapeze*, 350
- SPENDER, STEPHEN. From "Foreword" to *The Still Centre*, 348
- STEINBECK, JOHN. Excerpt from a letter, 576
- Time. "Bool" 114
- TRUMAN, HARRY S. From Fordham University Speech, May 11, 1946, 2
- U. S. WAR DEPARTMENT. Release on New Mexico Test, July 16, 1945, 8

### SELECTIONS FROM NOVELS

- DOS PASSOS, JOHN. "Proteus" from *U S A*, 79
- "The Campers at Kitty Hawk" from *U S A*, 99
- HUXLEY, ALDOUS. "Education in the World State" from *Brave New World*, 28
- SAROYAN, WILLIAM. "Mr. Mechano" from *The Human Comedy*, 22
- STEINBECK, JOHN. "Tractored Off" from *The Grapes of Wrath*, 158
- WOLFE, THOMAS. "Credo" from *You Can't Go Home Again*, 829
- "The Promise of America" from *You Can't Go Home Again*, 824

### SHORT STORIES

- ANDERSON, SHERWOOD. "Sophistication," 464
- CONRAD, JOSEPH. "The Secret Sharer," 793
- FAULKNER, WILLIAM. "The Bear," 412
- FORSTER, E. M. "The Machine Stops," 739
- HUXLEY, ALDOUS. "Young Archimedes," 440
- JOYCE, JAMES. "Araby," 460
- LONGSTRETH, EDWARD. "Mrs. Semplon's Fifth Freedom," 110
- MCLAUGHLIN, ROBERT. "A Short Wait Between Trains," 167
- PIRANDELLO, LUIGI. "War," 487
- PORTER, KATHERINE ANNE. "A Day's Work," 311
- STEINBECK, JOHN. "The Red Pony," Part I, 422
- "The Harness," 563
- THURBER, JAMES. "The Day the Dam Broke," 116
- "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty," 571
- WOLFE, THOMAS. "The Lost Boy," 390

## Distribution of Selections by Types

### DRAMA

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>ANDERSON, MAXWELL. <i>Winterset</i>, 506</p> <p>BARRY, PHILIP. <i>The Philadelphia Story</i>, 597</p> <p>BEHRMAN, S. N. <i>Biography</i>, 657</p> <p>ČAPEK, KAREL. <i>R.U.R.</i>, 38</p> | <p>CORWIN, NORMAN. <i>We Hold These Truths</i>, 833</p> <p>MACLEISH, ARCHIBALD. <i>The Fall of the City</i>, 725</p> <p>O'NEILL, EUGENE. <i>"The Hairy Ape,"</i> 283</p> |
|---|--|

### POETRY

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>ARNOLD, MATTHEW. "Dover Beach," 854</p> <p>AUDEN, W. H. "Get there if you can," 156</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">"September 1, 1939," 245</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">"Refugee Blues," 246</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">From "Letter to Lord Byron," Part IV, 555</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">"Casino," 656</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">"Law Like Love," 768</p> <p>BLAKE, WILLIAM. "The Little Black Boy," 174</p> <p>BYRON, GEORGE GORDON. Canto III, Stanza VI from <i>Childe Harold's Pilgrimage</i>, 336</p> <p>COWARD, NOEL. Chorus from "Twentieth Century Blues," 596</p> <p>CUMMINGS, E. E. "Space being . . . Curved," 107</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">"O sweet spontaneous," 108</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">"in Just-spring," 388</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">"nobody loses all the time," 765</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">"If you can't eat you got to," 766</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">"since feeling is first," 766</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">"anyone lived in a pretty how town," 766</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">"these children singing," 767</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">"love is more thicker," 768</p> <p>ELIOT, T. S. "Animula," 580</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">"The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," 647</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">"Portrait of a Lady," 652</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">"The Hollow Men," 654</p> <p>FEARING, KENNETH. "No Credit," 81</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">"Portrait (2)," 560</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">"Any Man's Advice to His Son," 584</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">"American Rhapsody (4)," 720</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">"Readings, Forecasts, Personal Guidance," 721</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">"Devil's Dream," 723</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">"Travelogue in a Shooting-Gallery," 763</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">"Reception Good," 764</p> | <p>FROST, ROBERT. "The Star-Splitter," 102</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">"Two Tramps in Mud Time," 272</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">"Departmental," 274</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">"To a Thinker," 772</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">"The Vantage Point," 773</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">"A Drumlin Woodchuck," 774</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">"Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening," 774</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">"Neither Out Far Nor In Deep," 775</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">"Mending Wall," 775</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">"There are Roughly Zones," 776</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">"Aequainted With the Night," 777</p> <p>HOUSMAN, A. E. "When I was one-and-twenty," 470</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">"Reveille," 470</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">"Loveliest of trees, the cherry now," 470</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">"Soldier from the wars returning," 485</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">"The half-moon westers low, my love," 485</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">"The laws of God, the laws of man," 769</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">"The chestnut casts his flambeaux," 769</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">"Terence, this is stupid stuff," 770</p> <p>JEFFERS, ROBINSON. From "Roan Stallion," 16</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">"Shine, Perishing Republic," 241</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">"The Purse-Seine," 242</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">"The Answer," 243</p> <p>LINDSAY, VACHEL. "The Leaden-Eyed," 580</p> <p>MACLEISH, ARCHIBALD. "You, Andrew Marvell," 121</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">From "The Hamlet of A. MacLeish," 121</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">"American Letter," 261</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">"Men," 264</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">"Speech to Those Who Say Comrade," 265</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">America Was Promises, 266</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">"Eleven," 389</p> |
|--|--|

## Appendices

- "Memorial Rain," 485  
*The Fall of the City*, 725  
 "Epistle to be Left in the Earth," 738  
 "Geography of This Time," 851  
 MACNEICE, LOUIS. *Autumn Journal*, Parts III, VII, IX, XII, XV, and end of Part XXIV, 248  
 "Epilogue to Iceland," 258  
 MASEFIELD, JOHN. "On Growing Old," 576  
 MILLS, IRVING, and MITCHELL PARISH. "Sophisticated Lady," 596  
 OWEN, WILFRED. "The Seed," 471  
 "Apologia pro poemate meo," 477  
 "Anthem for Doomed Youth," 478  
 "Greater Love," 479  
 "Strange Meeting," 479  
 "Dulce et Decorum Est," 480  
 "Futility," 481  
 POPE, ALEXANDER. From "An Essay on Man," 16  
 ROBINSON, E. A. "The Mill," 158  
 "Cassandra," 244  
 "Flammonde," 561  
 "Mr. Flood's Party," 577  
 From "Captain Craig," 771  
 RODMAN, SELDEN. "V-Letter to Karl Shapiro in Australia," 259  
 SANDBURG, CARL. *The People, Yes*, Parts 28, 29, 30, 86, 105, 107, p. 274  
*The People, Yes*, Part 9, p. 583  
*The People, Yes*, Part 57, p. 820  
 SHAKESPEARE, WILLIAM. From *As You Like It*, 388  
 SHAPIRO, KARL J. "Buick," 96  
 "New Guinea Letter," 260  
 "Elegy for a Dead Soldier," 482  
 SHELLEY, PERCY BYSSHE. "Political Greatness," 792  
 SPENDER, STEPHEN. "The Express," 97  
 "The Landscape Near an Aerodrome," 98  
 "Not palaces, an era's crown," 245  
 "Ultima Ratio Regum," 482  
 "I think continually of those who were truly great," 824  
 TENNYSON, ALFRED. "Ulysses," 578  
 WHITMAN, WALT. "Years of the Modern," 7  
 WORDSWORTH, WILLIAM. From "Ode: Intimations of Immortality," 579  
 YEATS, WILLIAM BUTLER. "A Prayer for My Daughter," 582

## PAINTINGS AND DRAWINGS

- ADDAMS, CHARLES. "Sometimes I ask myself . . .," 75  
 ARTZYBASHEFF, BORIS. Humanized war machines, 37, 38  
 BOHRD, AARON. "Breton Village Cross," 132  
 DAY, ROBERT. "Well, it looks like a buttercup to me," 109  
 DEAN, ABNER. "The Bright Young Men," 34-35  
 "Inspiration," 334-335  
 "Return to Normal," 762  
 GOLDBERG, RUBE. "Every Woman," 110  
 LENSON, MICHAEL. Study for the painting "Bikini," 724  
 MAULDIN, BILL. "Th' hell this ain't th' most important hole . . .," 490  
 "I'm depending on you, old men . . .," 491  
 "Fresh, spirited American troops . . .," 492  
 "I'm beginning to feel like a fugitive from th' law of averages," 493  
 PETTY, MARY. "Has anybody ever thought of winning the Communists over to our way of life?" 223  
 "Promise you'll wait for me. I want something real to come back to." 651  
 ROBINSON, JERRY. "Atoman," 36  
 SHEELER, CHARLES. "Conversation—Earth and Sky," 84  
 THURBER, JAMES. "Home," 575

*Distribution of Selections by Types*

**PHOTOGRAPHS**

Atom-busting cyclotron, 3	Race riot, 171, 172
Chinese baby, Shanghai, 6	Rats are driven crazy, 112
Mid-town Manhattan, 831	Sharecroppers, 163, 164, 165, 166
Nagasaki, Japan, under atomic bomb attack, 5	Sixteen-horse combine, 830
Nagasaki after atomic bombing, 6	Soviet factory women working in gas masks in a garment factory, 28

## BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

FURTHER INFORMATION on the authors can be found in *Who's Who, Twentieth Century Authors*, edited by Kunitz and Haycroft, *Webster's Biographical Dictionary*, and in *Contemporary American Authors and Contemporary British Literature*, revised editions, both edited by Fred B. Millett.

JAMES TRUSLOW ADAMS (1878- ) was born in Brooklyn. He received his B.A. from the Brooklyn Polytechnic and his M.A. from Yale. He became a partner in a stock exchange firm in Wall Street and exercised his interests in banking, manufacturing and railroading. During World War I he was a captain in military intelligence, and was later on the Colonel House Commission to prepare data for the peace conference. For ten years he was on the advisory council of the *Yale Review*. Among his writings are *The Founding of New England*, 1921, *Our Business Civilization*, 1929, *The March of Democracy*, 1932, and *America's Progress in Civilization* (with G. E. Freeland), 1940.

CHARLES ADDAMS (1912- ) was born in New Jersey and studied at Colgate University, the University of Pennsylvania, and the Grand Central School of Art in New York. He is a contributor to *Collier's* and *The New Yorker*, where his cartoons have been appearing regularly since 1935. He has exhibited at museums, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, and published a collection, *Drawn and Quartered*, in 1942.

FREDERICK LEWIS ALLEN (1890- ) was born in Boston, and educated at Groton School and at Harvard. He taught English at Harvard, 1912-1914, but then turned to magazine editing. In 1941 he was made editor-in-chief of *Harper's Magazine*. He is probably best known for his excellent informal histories of our time, *Only Yesterday*

(the 1920's), 1931, and *Since Yesterday* (the 1930's), 1940.

MAXWELL ANDERSON (1888- ) was born in Pennsylvania. After graduating from the University of North Dakota, where he studied drama under Frederick H. Koch, he taught English in North Dakota and California. Several years experience on newspapers in San Francisco and New York, during which time he wrote poetry and founded a poetry magazine, preceded his active work in drama. *White Desert* was a failure on the stage in 1923, but the success in 1924 of *What Price Glory?*, written with Laurence Stallings, turned him from editorial writing to the stage. His best known plays, besides *Winterset*, 1935, are *Elizabeth the Queen*, 1930, *Both Your Houses*, 1933, *The Wingless Victory*, 1936, *High Tor*, 1937, *Key Largo*, 1939, and *The Eve of St. Mark*, 1942.

SHERWOOD ANDERSON (1876-1941) was born in Camden, Ohio. He had little formal education after the age of fourteen, although he attended Wittenberg College briefly. After serving in the Spanish-American War, he managed a paint factory until one day when, according to legend, in the midst of dictating a letter he walked out of modern business into a literary career. In 1924 he settled in Marion, Virginia, where he edited both local papers, one Republican, one Democrat. His death interrupted a "goodwill tour" of South America. His books include *Winesburg, Ohio*, 1919, *A Story Tell-*

## Biographical Notes

*et al. Story*, 1924, *Dark Laughter*, 1925, *Home Town*, 1940, and *Memoirs*, 1942.

MATTHEW ARNOLD (1822-1888) was a graduate of Balliol College, Oxford, winning the Newdigate prize in poetry in 1843. He was inspector of schools from 1851 to 1886 and professor of poetry in Oxford from 1857 to 1867. He lectured widely and was in America in 1883-1884 and 1886. His critical works include two series of *Essays in Criticism*, 1865, 1888, *Culture and Anarchy*, 1869, and *Literature and Dogma*, 1873; his poems were collected in 1890.

BORIS ARTZYBASHEFF (1899- ) was born in Kharkov, Russia, and studied in St. Petersburg until 1918. After serving for two years in the Ukrainian Army, he came to America in 1919 and became a citizen of the United States in 1926. He is the author of *Seven Simeons*, 1937, the editor of *Aesop's Fables*, 1933, and the illustrator of the works of many authors, including Balzac, Tagore, Edmund Wilson, and Padraic Colum. At present his chief work is the painting of covers and illustrations for *Time*, *Life*, and *Fortune* magazines.

W. H. AUDEN (1907- ) was born at York, England, and educated at Christ Church College, Oxford. He taught for a time. In 1937 he served as an ambulance driver for the Loyalist forces in the Spanish Civil War. He married Erika Mann, daughter of Thomas Mann. In 1939 he came to the United States and took out citizenship papers. He has taught at the New School for Social Research, the University of Michigan, and Swarthmore. His *Collected Poems* appeared in 1945.

PHILIP BARRY (1896- ) was born in Rochester, New York, and educated at Yale. After graduation in 1919 he served as a clerk in embassy work in Washington and London, but resigned to enter the 47 Workshop at

Harvard. For many years now he has written for both Broadway and Hollywood. His plays include *Hotel Universe*, 1930, *The Animal Kingdom*, 1932, and *The Philadelphia Story*, 1939.

CHARLES BEARD (1874- ) was born in Indiana, and educated at DePauw, Oxford, Cornell and Columbia. He was professor of politics at Columbia from 1907 to 1917, after which he served for five years as director of the Training School for Public Service in New York. His later years have been devoted to writing and advisory work. His books include *Economic Interpretation of the Constitution*, 1913, *Economic Basis of Politics*, 1922, and, with his wife, *The Rise of American Civilization*, 1927, and *America in Midpassage*, 1939.

CARL BECKER (1873-1945) studied at Cornell College in Iowa, his native state, and at the University of Wisconsin. He held a fellowship in constitutional law at Columbia in 1898-1899 and taught at several universities and colleges, including Dartmouth, the University of Kansas and Cornell University, where he remained as professor of history from 1917 to his death. Some of his published books are *The Declaration of Independence—A Study in the History of Political Ideas*, 1922, *The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth Century Philosophers*, 1932, *Modern Democracy*, 1941, *How New Will the Better World Be?*, 1944, and *Freedom and Responsibility in the American Way of Life*, 1945.

S. N. BEHRMAN (1893- ) was born in Massachusetts, and studied at Clark, Harvard and Columbia. He has contributed to various leading magazines and since 1927 has written for the stage and films. Among his plays are *Meteor*, 1929, *Brief Moments*, 1932, and *No Time for Comedy*, 1939. His scenarios include *Queen Christina* (Greta Garbo) and *The Tale of Two Cities* (Ronald Colman).



## Appendices

RUTH BENEDICT (1887- ) was born in New York. After graduating from Vassar, she taught English, published poetry and studied anthropology under Franz Boas at Columbia, where she later became a member of the department. She has done field work among the Pueblo, Apache and Blackfoot Indians. Her books include *Patterns of Culture*, 1934, and *Race: Science and Politics*, 1940.

WILLIAM BLAKE (1757-1827) began as an engraver's apprentice, using etched copper plates to print his own poems in hand-illustrated and colored copies. An illustrator of many books, he was at the time of his death designing plates for Dante's *Divine Comedy*. His lyric poems are collected in *Songs of Innocence*, 1789, and *Songs of Experience*, 1794, his mystical and symbolic works in *Prophetic Books*, 1793-1804, *Milton*, 1804, and *Jerusalem*, 1804-1818.

EDMUND BLUNDEN (1896- ) was born in Yalding, Kent. He interrupted his schooling in 1916 to enlist in World War I, became a lieutenant on active service, and was awarded the Military Cross. He completed his education at Oxford after the war, and has engaged in journalism, travel and teaching. Since 1931 he has been a Fellow and Tutor at Merton College, Oxford. He has edited the works of numerous English poets. His *Poems: 1930-1940* was issued in 1941.

GEORGE BOAS (1891- ) studied at Brown, Harvard and Columbia. Beginning as an instructor in forensics at the University of California, he has taught at Johns Hopkins University since 1921, where he is professor of the history of philosophy. Author of *The Major Traditions of European Philosophy*, 1928, *Our New Ways of Thinking*, 1930, *Philosophy and Poetry*, 1933, *A Primer for Critics*, 1937, and contributor to *Harper's Magazine* and *The Atlantic Monthly*.

AARON BOHRD (1907- ) was born in Chicago and studied at the Chicago Art Institute and the Art Students' League in New York. He was artist in residence at Illinois Normal University during 1942-1943. After a government assignment with the War Art Unit in the South Pacific Area, he was made artist war correspondent for *Life* magazine. His paintings are included in the permanent collections at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Whitney Museum of American Art, Chicago Art Institute and the Corcoran Museum at Washington. He held Guggenheim fellowships in 1936-1937 and 1937-1938 and has won many awards, including an honorable mention at the Carnegie International Exhibition of 1939.

KENNETH BURKE (1897- ) was born in Pittsburgh, and educated at Ohio State and Columbia. He was music critic of the *Dial*, 1927-1929, and of the *Nation*, 1934-1936. He won the *Dial* award in 1928 and was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1935. Among his books are *Permanence and Change: An Anatomy of Purpose*, 1935, *Attitudes Toward History*, 1937, *The Philosophy of Literary Form*, 1941, and *A Grammar of Motives*, 1945.

GEORGE GORDON, LORD BYRON (1788-1824) lived in Scotland to the age of ten, when he succeeded to the barony created for a seventeenth century ancestor. He was educated at Harrow and Cambridge University, where he published his first poems, *Hours of Idleness*, the reviewer's attack on which Byron answered with the satire *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, 1809. After traveling over Europe and the Near East, where he swam the Hellespont, he returned to speak in the House of Lords and to win fame with *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, 1812-1814, a narrative poem of travels through Europe. He left England, never to return, in 1816, finished *Childe Harold* and began the satiric epic *Don Juan* in 1818. He joined Leigh Hunt on *The Liberal*

## Biographical Notes

magazine, spoke out for Italy's freedom, accepted an invitation to help Greece in its struggle for independence, and died of malaria at Missolonghi. His works include Turkish tales in verse, historical dramas, and satires.

KAREL ČAPEK (1890-1938) was born in Bohemia and attended the University of Prague, studying science and philosophy. With the creation of Czechoslovakia, Čapek, a friend of President Masaryk, worked to give a truly democratic form to the new nation. He endeavored with Beneš to solve the Sudeten German crisis. For a time he was Art Director of the National Art Theater, and later supervised his own theater. Somewhat influenced by the speculative novels of H. G. Wells (for example, *The War of the Worlds*), he was greatly interested in the implications of modern scientific discoveries. Among his plays are *R. U. R.*, 1923, *Adam the Creator*, 1929, and *The Power and the Glory*, 1938.

DEMETRIOS CAPETANAKIS (1913-1944) was born in Greece and studied at the universities of Athens, Heidelberg, and Cambridge. After the beginning of World War II, he remained in England to work for the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs in London. A number of his essays and poems, written in English, appeared in the British series, *Penguin New Writing* and *New Writing and Daylight*.

STUART CHASE (1888- ) was born in Somerworth, New Hampshire, and educated at M.I.T. and Harvard. For a time he was with the Federal Trade Commission in Washington, and later the Labor Bureau in New York. In 1927 he went to Russia as economic advisor to a trade union delegation. With F. J. Schlink he organized Consumer's Research. He has been unusually active as a lecturer, writer and consultant in economics. His books include *The Tragedy of Waste*,

1925, *The Economy of Abundance*, 1934, *The Tyranny of Words*, 1938, and *The Road We Are Traveling*, 1942.

MORRIS R. COHEN (1880- ) was born in Russia and came to this country when he was twelve. He was educated at the College of the City of New York and at Harvard. From 1912 to 1938 he was professor of philosophy at the College of the City of New York, then joined the faculty of the University of Chicago. He has also been visiting professor at Harvard, Stanford, Yale and St. John's College. His books include *Reason and Nature*, 1931, *Law and the Social Order*, 1933, *An Introduction to Logic and Scientific Method*, 1934, *A Preface to Logic*, 1945, and *The Faith of a Liberal*, 1946.

JOSEPH CONRAD (1857-1924) was born Józef Teodor Konrad Korzeniowski in Russian Poland. He knew no English until he was twenty, learning it then laboriously from newspapers. At seventeen he shipped to sea on a French vessel, shifted later to English merchant ships and by 1880 had passed his examination as master. Failing health drove him from the sea in his late thirties, and settling in England, he became one of the greatest modern masters of prose fiction. His works include *The Nigger of the Narcissus*, 1897, *Lord Jim*, 1900, *Nostromo*, 1904, *Under Western Eyes*, 1911, and *Victory*, 1915.

NORMAN CORWIN (1910- ) was born in Boston. Since 1938 he has been a writer and producer-director for the Columbia Broadcasting System. He has won many prizes for his work in radio, and was given a grant in 1942 by the American Academy of Arts and Letters. Several of his best known productions are *Ballad for Americans*, 1939, *My Client Curly*, 1940, and the radio opera *The People, Yes* (based on Sandburg's poems), 1941. Collections of his work are *Thirteen by Corwin*, 1941, *More by Corwin*, 1943, and *Untitled and Other Radio Dramas*, 1946.

## Appendices

**NORMAN COUSINS** was born in New Jersey, and studied at Columbia University. Writer and editor on various newspapers and magazines since 1934, he is now editor of *The Saturday Review of Literature*. He was publication consultant and editor for the Office of War Information's publication *U.S.A.* He is author of *The Good Inheritance*, 1941, and *The Democratic Chance*, 1942. *Modern Man Is Obsolete* has been issued in expanded book form by the Viking Press.

**NOEL COWARD** (1899- ) was born in London and was privately educated. As an actor he made his first appearance on the stage in 1910 and has since performed chiefly in his own plays. He is the author of many plays, including *Hay Fever*, 1924, *The Vortex*, 1925, *Private Lives*, 1930, *Cavalcade*, 1931, *Design for Living*, 1933, and *Blithe Spirit*, 1942, and played the leading part in his own motion picture, *In Which We Serve*. His stories are collected in *To Step Aside*, 1939; his autobiography is *Present Indicative*, 1937.

**E. E. CUMMINGS** (1894- ) was born in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and graduated from Harvard in 1915. He received his M.A. the following year. He was a volunteer ambulance driver in France before the entry of the United States into World War I. After the war he lived in Paris for a time, then returned to New York. He made a trip to Russia in 1930. His novel, *The Enormous Room*, was published in 1922. His poetry includes *Collected Poems*, 1938, *Fifty Poems*, 1940, and *I X I*, 1945.

**ROBERT DAY** (1900- ) was born in California and studied at the Otis Art Institute. He began work as a cartoonist for the *Los Angeles Times* and was later in the art departments of the *Los Angeles Examiner* and the *New York Herald-Tribune*. In addition to drawings for advertisements, he has published *All Out for the Sack Race!* and illustrated *We Shook the Family Tree*. He

is a contributor to *The New Yorker*, *Collier's*, and *The Saturday Evening Post*.

**ABNER DEAN** (1910- ) was born in New York. After graduating from Dartmouth in 1931, he experimented with various art forms, published for some years cartoons and covers for *The New Yorker*. His work gained a wider notice with the publication of seven of his drawings in *Life* magazine and the consequent recognition given to his book, *It's a long way to Heaven*.

**JOHN DOS PASSOS** (1896- ) was born in Chicago and graduated from Harvard. He was in the ambulance and medical services during World War I. Later he traveled widely as a newspaper correspondent and free-lance writer. Among his novels are *Three Soldiers*, 1921, *Manhattan Transfer*, 1925, and the trilogy, *U. S. A.*, 1937.

**ALBERT EINSTEIN** (1879- ), the discoverer of the theory of relativity, was born in Germany. He holds honorary degrees from nearly every leading university in the world and was awarded the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1922. Upon his arrival in America in 1933, he was made a life member of the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton. He is author of *The Meaning of Relativity*, 1923, *About Zionism*, 1931, *Why War?* (with Sigmund Freud), 1933, and *Evolution of Physics* (with Leopold Infeld), 1938.

**T. S. ELIOT** (1888- ) was born in St. Louis, Missouri. He graduated with an M.A. in 1910 from Harvard, where his classmates included Heywood Broun, John Reed, Walter Lippmann and Stuart Chase. He has lived in England since 1915, and became a British subject in 1927. In 1928 he announced that he was "an Anglo-Catholic in religion, a classicist in literature, and a royalist in politics." His poetic works include *Collected Poems: 1909-1935*, *Four Quartets*, 1943, and the poetic play, *Murder in the Cathedral*,

## Biographical Notes

1935. Among his collections of essays are *Selected Essays: 1917-1932*, *Essays Ancient and Modern*, 1936, and *The Idea of a Christian Society*, 1940.

WALKER EVANS (1903- ) was born in St. Louis. He attended Williams College and the Sorbonne in Paris, and has since worked consistently with the camera. During 1940-1942 he held Guggenheim Fellowships. Besides one-man shows of his camera studies, he published *American Photographs*, 1938, and, with James Agee, *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*, 1941.

WILLIAM FAULKNER (1897- ) was born in New Albany, Mississippi, of a family that had been reduced to genteel poverty by the Civil War. After the fifth grade his schooling was desultory. During World War I he flew with the Canadian Air Force, had two planes shot down over France, and was wounded. He has lived most of his life in Oxford, Mississippi. Among his books are *The Sound and the Fury*, 1929, *These Thirteen* (short stories), 1931, *Absalom, Absalom!*, 1936, and *Go Down, Moses, and Other Stories*, 1942.

KENNETH FEARING (1902- ) was born in Oak Park, Illinois. He attended the University of Illinois, but transferred to and graduated from the University of Wisconsin in 1924. He worked at selling, free-lance writing, journalism, and for a time taught poetry at the League of American Writers in New York. He has said that poetry "must be exciting; otherwise it is valueless. . . . Besides being exciting, I think that poetry necessarily must be understandable." Among his books are *Collected Poems*, 1940, and *Afternoon of a Pawnbroker and Other Poems*, 1943.

F. SCOTT FITZGERALD (1896-1940) was born in St. Paul, Minnesota, and educated at Princeton. He left college in 1917 to serve

as an infantry lieutenant and aide-de-camp until 1919. His first novel, *This Side of Paradise*, 1920, a reflection of the jazz age following World War I, was an instantaneous success. Thereafter he lived chiefly on Long Island or on the Riviera and in Rome. He spent his final three years in Hollywood and did some writing for motion pictures. Among his books are *The Great Gatsby*, 1925, *Tender Is the Night*, 1934, and the unfinished novel about Hollywood, *The Last Tycoon*, 1941.

E. M. FORSTER (1879- ) was born in England and educated at Cambridge. He has spent much time in traveling, and turned the experiences of two years in India into his famous novel, *A Passage to India*, 1924. His other books include *A Room with a View*, 1908, *Howards End*, 1910, and a series of lectures, *Aspects of the Novel*, 1927.

ROBERT FROST (1875- ) was born in San Francisco. After the death of his father in 1885, his mother took her children to Lawrence, Massachusetts. Eventually he attended Dartmouth for a few months, and Harvard for two years, but left college to teach and farm. He moved to England in 1912, where his first two books of poems were published—his first major recognition. In 1915 he returned to the United States. He has lectured and taught in various colleges, principally at Amherst. His work includes *Collected Poems*, 1939, *A Witness Tree*, 1942, and *A Masque of Reason*, 1945.

RUBE GOLDBERG (1883- ) was born in San Francisco and graduated from the University of California in 1904. He was cartoonist for the *San Francisco Chronicle* and *Bulletin* between 1904 and 1907 and for the *New York Evening Mail* from 1907 to 1921. His own creations, "Boob McNutt," "Mike and Ike," "Side Show," have been syndicated since 1921, and his political cartoons have appeared in the *New York Sun*. He is the author of *Boobs Abroad*, *Chasing*

## Appendices

*the Blues* and *Is There a Doctor in the House?*, 1929, and of the motion picture, *Soup to Nuts*, 1930.

S. I. HAYAKAWA (1906- ) was born in Canada, and educated at the University of Manitoba, McGill and the University of Wisconsin. At present he is a professor of English at the Illinois Institute of Technology. His book, *Language in Action*, 1941, grew primarily out of his research in semantics with the Polish semanticist Korzybski.

A. E. HOUSMAN (1859-1936) was born in Worcestershire and attended St. John's College, Oxford. He failed his fourth-year honors examinations, but returned for one term of study to pass the degree. From 1882 to 1892 he was a clerk in the Government Patent Office in London. He continued his classical studies at night and won a reputation as a brilliant classical scholar. In 1892 he was appointed Professor of Latin in University College, London, and in 1911 received the same appointment in Trinity College, Cambridge, a position which he held until his death. He once said he was "not a pessimist but a pejorist." *A Shropshire Lad* was published in 1896, *Last Poems* in 1922. *More Poems*, a posthumous collection, appeared in 1936. His essay, *The Name and Nature of Poetry*, was printed in 1933.

ALDOUS HUXLEY (1894- ) is the grandson of Thomas Henry Huxley and grand-nephew of Matthew Arnold. He was educated at Eton and Oxford. During 1919-1920 he was on the editorial staff of the *Athenaeum*, and during 1920-1921 served as dramatic critic on the *Westminster Gazette*. He has traveled widely and now lives in Hollywood, California. Among his novels are *Antic Hay*, 1923, *Point Counter Point*, 1928, *Brave New World*, 1932, *Eyeless in Gaza*, 1936, and *Time Must Have a Stop*, 1945. His other work includes *Proper Studies*, 1927, *Do What You Will*, 1929, *Texts and Pretexts*, 1932,

*Ends and Means*, 1937, and *The Perennial Philosophy*, 1945.

WILLIAM JAMES (1842-1910), the American psychologist and philosopher, was the brother of Henry James the novelist. A graduate of Harvard Medical School, he taught anatomy, physiology and hygiene at Harvard from 1872, and was professor of philosophy there from 1881. He was the founder of Pragmatism and author of *Principles of Psychology*, 1890, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, 1902, *Pragmatism*, 1907, *A Pluralistic Universe*, 1909, and *Essays in Radical Empiricism*, 1912.

ROBINSON JEFFERS (1887- ) was born in Pittsburgh. He lived in Europe from 1899 until 1902. In 1905 he received his A.B. from Occidental College. He did some graduate work in forestry and medicine. In 1912 a legacy made him independent, and two years later he settled permanently at Carmel, California, where he built his famous stone tower. Among his books are *Selected Poetry*, 1938, and *Be Angry at the Sun*, 1941.

THOMAS JEFFERSON (1743-1826), third president of the United States, was born in Virginia and graduated from the College of William and Mary in 1762. Admitted to the bar in 1767, he was a member of Virginia House of Burgesses from 1769 to 1774, and at that time began the work that was to lead to American independence. A member of the Continental Congress, he wrote and presented the first draft of the Declaration of Independence to the Congress in 1776. Before his election as President in 1801, he was governor of Virginia, minister to France, Secretary of State, and Vice President. His election to the Presidency was by the House of Representatives after a tie with Aaron Burr in the popular vote. After his retirement in 1809, he helped found the University of Virginia and pursued his studies in agriculture, architecture, and literature. His chief writings,

## Biographical Notes

official and personal, are collected by S. K. Padover in *The Complete Jefferson*, 1942.

JAMES JOYCE (1882-1941) was born in Dublin and educated, at first with the intention of entering the priesthood, at Clongowes Wood College and Belvedere College in Ireland, and at the Royal University, Dublin, where he studied languages and literature. In 1904 he left Ireland, to return briefly only twice during the rest of his life. He studied medicine and music in Paris, taught languages in Italy and Switzerland, was in Zurich during World War I, and moved soon after to Paris, where he spent the remainder of his life. His first book, *Dubliners*, a group of short stories intended to portray the "paralysis" of Western civilization, was ready for publication in 1907, but was suppressed for seven years because of references to Edward VII. *Ulysses* (1922) was at first banned in England and the United States, but was finally passed for publication in 1934. His last work, *Finnegans Wake*, an experiment in language and symbolism, was published in 1939.

DOROTHEA LANGE (1895- ) was born in Hoboken, New Jersey. Besides private portrait work she has been documentary photographer for the Resettlement Administration, Farm Security Administration, War Relocation Authority, and Office of War Information. In 1941 she was awarded a Guggenheim Foundation fellowship. She collaborated with her husband Professor Paul S. Taylor and did the photographs for *An American Exodus: A Record of Human Erosion* (1939).

MICHAEL LENSON (1903- ) was born in Russia and came to America at the age of ten. He began his art training at the National Academy of Design in New York and was awarded the Chaloner Paris Prize (\$10,000) for painting in 1928, which enabled him to travel and study on the continent for four years. Besides painting murals

in a number of public buildings, he has exhibited his easel work at the leading museums and galleries throughout the country, supervised the design and execution of murals in a number of public buildings throughout New Jersey, lectured extensively on art, and from 1944 to 1946 was director of the Newark (N. J.) School of Fine and Industrial Arts.

VACHEL LINDSAY (1879-1931) was born in Springfield, Illinois. He attended Hiram College for three years, the Chicago Art Institute for one year, and spent some time studying at the New York Art School and the Metropolitan Museum. For several years he tramped the country, trading his poems, pamphlets and drawings for food and shelter, preaching his "gospel of beauty" as an evangelist. His *Selected Poems* appeared in 1931.

WALTER LIPPMANN (1889- ) was born in New York and graduated from Harvard in 1910. In his last year he was assistant to George Santayana. After college he worked with Lincoln Steffens on *Everybody's Magazine*. In 1914 he became one of the founding editors of the *New Republic*. For four months in 1917 he was assistant to Newton D. Baker, Secretary of War. He was a member of the American commission at the Versailles conference. In 1929 he became editor of the *New York World*, and when that daily ceased publication he went to the *Herald-Tribune*. In 1936 he reversed his political position, announcing himself a Republican. He made a tour of Germany in 1946. His many books include *A Preface to Politics*, 1913, *A Preface to Morals*, 1929, *The Good Society*, 1937, *U. S. Foreign Policy*, 1944, and *U. S. War Aims*, 1944.

EDWARD LONGSTRETH (1894- ) was born in Pennsylvania. He studied at Yale and the University of Pennsylvania and was a second lieutenant in the U. S. Army from 1917 to 1919. After the war he was a reporter for the Philadelphia *Evening Bulletin*.

## Appendices

ism, a publisher of magazines and a staff editor for *Smart Set*. Since 1930 he has been in radio work, at first with advertising firms and corporations, later as a free-lance writer. He created several radio shows and wrote "Cavalcade of America" during its first two years on the air. He has published *The Life of the Party*, 1930, and *The Cavalcade of America Series*, 1939.

THOMAS MACAULAY (1800-1859) was born in Leicestershire and educated at Cambridge. A member of Parliament for four terms between 1830 and 1856, he was Secretary of War in 1839-1841, and was made the first Baron Macaulay in 1857. He was a contributor to the *Edinburgh Review* from 1825 on, and wrote five volumes of a *History of England*, covering the reigns of James II and William III, as well as numerous speeches, biographical and literary essays and *The Lays of Ancient Rome*, 1842.

ARCHIBALD MacLEISH (1892- ) was born in Glencoe, Illinois. He received his B.A. from Yale in 1915, and his LL.B. from Harvard in 1919. He enlisted in the Field Artillery in 1917 and was discharged as a captain. From 1923 to 1928 he traveled abroad. On his return he worked on *Fortune* magazine. In 1939 he was named Librarian of Congress, and in 1941 was appointed Director of Office of Facts and Figures (which later became the Office of War Information under Elmer Davis). For a while he served as Under-Secretary of State. Among his books are *Selected Poems: 1924-1933*, 1936, *America Was Promises*, 1939, the two radio plays, *The Fall of the City*, 1937, and *Air Raid*, 1938, and his essays, *The Irresponsibles*, 1940, *The American Cause*, 1941, and *A Time to Speak*, 1941.

LOUIS MacNEICE (1907- ) was born in Belfast. He studied classics and philosophy at Merton College, Oxford, 1926-1930, and later taught at the University of Birmingham and University of London. He was visiting

lecturer at Cornell in 1940. During the war he wrote for the British Broadcasting Company. His books include *Modern Poetry*, 1938, and *Poems 1925-1940*.

JOHN MASEFIELD (1878- ) was born in Ledbury, Herefordshire. He studied for the merchant marine, shipped on several voyages and then worked in New York at miscellaneous jobs. In 1897 he returned to London and began free-lance writing. He was in Red Cross work during World War I. In 1930 he was made Poet Laureate of England. His *Collected Poems* appeared in several earlier editions and was reissued in 1935.

SOMERSET MAUGHAM (1874- ) was born in Paris. Much of his early life is reflected in his novel, *Of Human Bondage*, 1915. He studied medicine, but never practiced, preferring writing instead. His first success came as a playwright in 1907. Since then he has traveled widely and lived in many parts of the world. His fiction includes *The Moon and Sixpence*, 1919, *The Razor's Edge*, 1945, and such collections of short stories as *The Trembling of a Leaf*, 1921, and *The Mixture as Before*, 1940. Among his plays are *The Circle*, 1921, and *Our Betters*, 1923. *The Summing Up*, 1938, is autobiography.

WILLIAM MAULDIN (1922- ) was born in New Mexico and grew up on a ranch near Phoenix, Arizona. While attending high school he took a correspondence course in cartooning. He then went to Chicago to continue his studies at the Art Institute. At the age of eighteen he entered the army and served three years with the 45th Division, fighting through the Sicilian campaign and later being wounded in Italy. His drawings appeared in the *45th Division News* and, after his transfer in early 1944, in *Stars and Stripes*. *Up Front* was published in 1945. He now syndicates his Joe and Willie as civilians.

## Biographical Notes

**WILLIAM McFEE** (1881- ) was born in London. He attended local schools and at seventeen was apprenticed to a firm of mechanical engineers for three years. Except for occasional absences, he has lived in America since 1912. During World War I he was a sub-lieutenant in the British Navy. Among his books are *Casuals of the Sea*, 1916, *Swallowing the Anchor*, 1925, and *The Harbourmaster*, 1932.

**ST. CLAIR McKELWAY** (1905- ), an associate editor of *The New Yorker*, has worked on the *New York World* and the *New York Herald-Tribune*. He has written for a number of magazines, and is now writing in Hollywood.

**ROBERT McLAUGHLIN** (1908- ) is a frequent contributor to *The New Yorker* and other magazines. He has recently served as a second lieutenant in the Armed Forces. A collection of his stories, entitled *A Short Wait Between Trains*, was published in 1944.

**WALTER MILLIS** (1899- ) was born in Georgia and educated at Yale. After graduation he became editorial and staff writer for several newspapers. He was in the field artillery during World War I. He is author of *The Martial Spirit*, 1931, *The Road to War*, 1935, and *Why Europe Fights*, 1940.

**JOSEPH MITCHELL** (1908- ) was born in North Carolina, and educated at the University of North Carolina. He began as a newspaper reporter in New York, and is now a staff member of *The New Yorker*. In an author's note to *McSorley's Wonderful Saloon*, 1944, from which "Professor Sea Gull" is reprinted, Mitchell says: "The people in a number of the stories are of the kind that many writers have recently got in the habit of referring to as 'the little people.' I regard this phrase as patronizing and repulsive. There are no little people in this book. They are as big as you are, whoever

you are." He has also written *My Ears Are Bent*.

**EUGENE O'NEILL** (1888- ) was born in New York City. His father was a popular actor. After one year at Princeton, O'Neill prospected for gold in Honduras, shipped for a year as a seaman, acted in his father's company and reported for the *New London Telegraph*. Sent to a sanatorium at twenty-three for tuberculosis, he there decided to become a playwright. He enrolled in 1914 in the 47 Workshop at Harvard, and in 1916 became associated with the Provincetown Theatre. His first full-length play, *Beyond the Horizon*, 1920, won the Pulitzer Prize. He has won it twice since, with *Anna Christie*, 1922, and *Strange Interlude*, 1928. In 1936 he was awarded the Nobel Prize. Other important plays are *The Emperor Jones*, 1921, *Desire Under the Elms*, 1925, *Mourning Becomes Electra*, 1931. Since 1935 he has been writing a cycle of nine plays tentatively titled *A Tale of Possessors Self-Dispossessed*, the saga of an American family, 1775-1932.

**J. ORTEGA Y GASSET** (1883- ) is a Spanish philosopher, writer and statesman. A professor at the University of Madrid before the Spanish Civil War, he was also a member of the Cortes in 1931 and civil governor of Madrid. He has recently been living in South America. He is author of *Invertebrate Spain*, 1922, and *The Revolt of the Masses*, 1932.

**WILFRED OWEN** (1893-1918) was born in Shropshire and educated at Birkenhead Institute, Liverpool. From 1913 to 1915 he tutored at Bordeaux. After England's entrance into World War I, he enlisted in the Artists' Rifles, saw much action, was wounded, and was awarded the Military Cross for gallantry. One week before the Armistice, he was killed trying to get his company across the Sambre Canal. *Poems*, 1920. Enlarged edition, 1931.



## Appendices

MARY PETTY lives in New York City and is married to Alan Dunn, the artist. In addition to drawing cartoons and covers for *The New Yorker*, she has illustrated *Goodbye, Mr. Chippendale* by T. H. Robsjohn-Gibblings and a new edition of Dickens' *Martin Chuzzlewit*. Of the people in her drawings she has said, "I'm afraid I am like the people I draw, of whom Harold Ross is reported to have once said, 'They look like something that lives under a rock.'"

LUIGI PIRANDELLO (1867-1936) was born in Sicily and educated at the Universities of Rome and of Bonn. His success as a writer came largely after 1916. He tried to found a national theater in Rome in 1925, but failed. His plays were attacked in 1933 by Mussolini, who had earlier supported them. In 1934 Pirandello was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature. Among his plays are *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, 1923, and *As You Desire Me*, 1931. Published posthumously was *The Medals and Other Stories*, 1939.

ALEXANDER POPE (1688-1744) gained fame in his own time as a keen satirist and a polished craftsman in poetry. He early established his artistic principles in *Essay on Criticism*, 1711, wrote the mock-heroic *Rape of the Lock*, 1712, and continued to compose in almost every popular poetic form of his age. Translations of the *Iliad* and part of the *Odyssey*, as well as an edition of Shakespeare, were followed by the long philosophic poem, *Essay on Man*, 1733-1734, which expressed contemporary thinking on man, his place in society and in the universe. *The Dunciad*, 1728-1729, gives a fair idea of the personal vindictiveness of his satires.

KATHERINE ANNE PORTER (1894- ) was born in Texas and educated at southern convent schools. She began writing when very young. In 1931 she was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship. She has said of her writing: "... my one aim is to tell a

straight story and to give true testimony." Her work includes *Flowering Judas*, 1930, *Pale Horse, Pale Rider*, 1939, and *The Leaning Tower*, 1943.

ARTHUR QUILLER-COUCH (1863-1944), the English man of letters, was born in Cornwall and educated at Oxford, where he became lecturer in classics and King Edward VII Professor of English Literature. He was commissioned in 1898 to complete Robert Louis Stevenson's *St. Ives*. Editor of several Oxford anthologies of verse, he was also the author of novels and short stories, as well as several volumes of criticism, including *On the Art of Writing*, 1916, *On the Art of Reading*, 1920, and *The Poet as Citizen*, 1934.

EMERY REVES (1904- ) was born in Hungary, and studied at Berlin, Paris and Zurich. In 1930 he founded the Cooperative Press Service, an international syndicate to gather and spread views of statesmen and writers of all nations. After coming to America in 1941 he established the Cooperative Publishing Company of New York, to issue such informative works as Fritz Thyssen's *I Paid Hitler*. He is author of *A Democratic Manifesto*, 1942.

EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON (1869-1935) was born in Head Tide, Maine. He spent two years at Harvard, then went to New York, where he worked on new subway construction, lived very frugally and continued his writing. In 1905 President Theodore Roosevelt, who had read and been impressed by his poems, had him appointed to the New York Customs House. After 1911 Robinson spent his summers at the MacDowell Colony in Peterboro, New Hampshire, and his winters in New York. His *Collected Poems* was printed in 1937.

SELDEN RODMAN (1909- ) graduated from Yale in 1931. He was co-editor of *Common Sense* magazine until 1943. During

## Biographical Notes

World War II he served as a master sergeant, on active duty. He is editor of *A New Anthology of Modern Poetry*, and author of the long poem, *The Airmen*, 1941.

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT (1882-1945) was born at Hyde Park, New York, and studied at Harvard and at Columbia Law School. After three years with a New York law firm, he was elected to the New York State Senate in 1910, supported Woodrow Wilson for President in 1912, and was appointed Assistant Secretary of the Navy in 1913. In 1918 he went to Europe for an inspection tour and again in 1919 to aid in demobilization of the American armies. Defeated as a candidate for the Vice Presidency in 1920, he returned to private law practice until 1928, when he was elected Governor of New York, a position he held for two terms. In 1932 he was elected President of the United States; he remained in that office until his death in April, 1945. He is remembered for his bold social and economic reforms, collectively known as the "New Deal," for having been the first President to be re-elected for a third term, and for his leadership of the Allied Nations in the fight against fascism.

CARL SANDBURG (1878- ) was born in Galesburg, Illinois. He left school at thirteen and worked at miscellaneous jobs for several years. During the Spanish-American War he enlisted and served in Puerto Rico for eight months. After his discharge he worked his way at Lombard College but did not graduate. He then engaged in newspaper work, and for a time was secretary to the Socialist mayor of Milwaukee. After 1914, his poetry began to win him wide recognition. His poetry includes *Selected Poems*, 1926, *The People, Yes*, 1936, and *Home Front Memo*, 1943. He has also published a biography: *Abraham Lincoln, the Prairie Years*, 1926, and *Abraham Lincoln, the War Years*, 1939.

WILLIAM SAROYAN (1908- ) was born in Fresno, California, of Armenian parentage. He began working very young and left school at the age of fifteen. He read widely, learned to use a typewriter, and started to write. Writing was easy for him, he says, because he wrote what he felt like writing and not what the world wished him to write. In 1934 his first volume of stories, *The Daring Young Man on the Flying Trapeze*, was published. Since then he has published several hundred stories, has had a number of plays produced and has written two novels, *The Human Comedy*, 1942, and *The Adventures of Wesley Jackson*, 1946. His play, *The Time of Your Life*, 1939, won the Pulitzer Prize, which Saroyan refused. He lives in California, where his life, as he says, is that of a loafer and natural-born writer.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (1564-1616) was the son of a glover and dealer in farm produce. His success as an actor-playwright in London, as member of the chamberlain's (later the king's) players, enabled him to buy the largest house in his hometown of Stratford. About 1610 he moved there, but continued his writing for the London stage. His individual plays were published between 1594 and 1622, and the comedies, tragedies, and historical dramas were collected first in 1623. *Richard II*, *Richard III* and the two parts of *Henry IV* are his greatest historical plays; the tragedies best known are *Romeo and Juliet*, *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*; comedies are *Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Twelfth Night* and *As You Like It*.

KARL SHAPIRO (1913- ) was born in Baltimore, and attended the University of Virginia and Johns Hopkins briefly. He went into the army in March, 1941. He was in Australia, New Guinea and the Southwest Pacific Area from March, 1942, to the end of the war. His books are *Person, Place, and Thing*, 1942, *V-Letter and Other Poems*, 1944, and *Essay on Rime*, 1945.

## Appendices

CHARLES SHEELER (1883- ) was born in Philadelphia and studied at the School of Industrial Art, Philadelphia, and at the Pennsylvania Academy of The Fine Arts. After painting trips to Europe, while he took up photography as a means of livelihood, he began to exhibit his paintings. He has exhibited in many galleries and museums, the most complete showing being at the Museum of Modern Art in 1939. His work in both painting and photography is based, to use his own words, on "the concept of a picture as having an underlying architectural structure to support the elements in nature which comprise the picture."

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY (1792-1822) was born in Sussex and attended Eton and Oxford. His writings on religion resulted in his expulsion from the university, and soon afterward he visited Ireland and addressed the popular assembly with a revolutionary speech. Abandoning his first wife, he eloped to Switzerland with Mary Wollstonecraft, later the author of *Frankenstein*, and spent most of the rest of his life in Italy with Lord Byron and their friends. He settled in Pisa in 1820 and was drowned during a storm on his return from a visit to Leigh Hunt in 1822. His poetic works include *Queen Mab*, privately printed in 1813, *Alastor*, 1816, *Revolt of Islam*, 1817, the tragedy *The Cenci*, 1818, *Adonais*, and *Prometheus Unbound*; his prose, the *Defence of Poetry*.

GEORGE SOKOLSKY (1893- ) was born in Utica, New York, and educated at Columbia. He was editor of the *Russian Daily News* in Petrograd in 1917, and spent the next dozen years in China, also in newspaper work. Later he became a contributor and columnist on American papers, and from 1937 to 1941 was a broadcaster for the National Association of Manufacturers. He is author of *Tinder Box of Asia*, 1932, *Labor Crisis in the United States*, 1938, and *The American Way of Life*, 1939.

GEORGE SOULE (1887- ) was born in Stamford, Connecticut, and graduated from Yale in 1908. For a time he worked in a publishing house. During World War I he was in Washington for a while as a special writer on war organization, but in May, 1918, went into the coast artillery. Since 1923 he has been an editor of *The New Republic*. He has served on various national commissions on economic matters, and has taught at Yale and Columbia. His books include *A Planned Society*, 1932, *The Coming American Revolution*, 1934, *An Economic Constitution for Democracy*, 1939, and *The Strength of Nations*, 1942.

STEPHEN SPENDER (1909- ) was born in London. He attended University College, Oxford, where he met and worked with W. H. Auden and Louis MacNeice. In 1937 he went to Spain to attend the International Writers Congress, and remained there for several months during the Civil War. His sympathies were with the Loyalists. During World War II he was in or near London, and served as a fireman through the blitz. His work includes *Poems*, 1933, *The Still Centre*, 1939, *Ruins and Visions*, 1942, and the prose volumes, *The Destructive Element*, 1934, and *Forward from Liberalism*, 1937.

OSWALD SPENGLER (1880-1936), a German philosopher and historian, was educated at the Universities of Munich and Berlin. He became internationally famous for *The Decline of the West*, revised edition 1923, the thesis of which is that history is cyclical rather than linear in movement, all dominant peoples passing from youth through maturity to decay. He believed that our Western civilization was approaching decadence, and would be succeeded by the Mongolian peoples of Asia. Never a Nazi, he refused to participate in the anti-Semitism campaign, and died under the official disapproval of Hitler's state.

## Biographical Notes

**GERTRUDE STEIN** (1874-1946) was born in Allegheny, Pennsylvania. Part of her early life was spent in Europe, and after her college course at Radcliffe, where she studied under William James, and several years at the Johns Hopkins Medical School, she returned to France for residence. During World War I she drove an ambulance and increased the circle of her friends, which already included Picasso and Matisse. After the war she gave guidance and encouragement to many young writers, such as Ernest Hemingway, Glenway Westcott and F. Scott Fitzgerald. Her own writings include *Three Lives*, 1908, *Tender Buttons*, 1915, *The Making of Americans*, 1925, *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, 1933, *Four Saints in Three Acts* (with music by Virgil Thomson), 1934, *Lectures in America*, 1935, and *Picasso*, 1938. Her experiences during World War II were dealt with in *Wars I Have Seen*, 1945, and *Brewsie and Willie*, 1946.

**JOHN STEINBECK** (1902- ) was born in Salinas, California, the scene of some of his fiction. He spent four years as a special student at Stanford, where his chief interest was in biology. Later he worked at many odd jobs. His first three books were failures. In 1935 *Tortilla Flat* was well received and was followed by *In Dubious Battle*, 1936, *Of Mice and Men*, 1937, and *The Long Valley* (short stories), 1938. His *Grapes of Wrath*, 1939, was a best-seller and was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in 1940. He also published *Sea of Cortez* (with E. F. Ricketts), 1941, *The Moon Is Down*, 1942, and *Cannery Row*, 1945.

**HENRY L. STIMSON** (1867- ) was born in New York City. Educated at Yale and at Harvard Law School, he was admitted to the bar in 1891. After serving as Secretary of War under President Taft in 1911-1913, he went to France with the American Expeditionary Force in 1917-1918, as lieutenant colonel in field artillery. He served as governor-general of the Philippine Islands,

1927-1929, as Secretary of State under President Hoover, 1929-1933, and again as Secretary of War under Presidents Roosevelt and Truman from July, 1940 to 1945. He was twice chairman of the American delegation to international conferences, in 1930 and 1932.

**ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON** (1809-1892) published a volume of poems with his brother in 1827 and attended Cambridge, where he was a member of a brilliant group of undergraduates. After some ill success in publishing poetry, he traveled in Europe, studied for nine years, and issued the successful *Poems* in 1842. In 1850, he published the elegy on his sister's fiancé, *In Memoriam*, and was made Poet Laureate. He turned to Arthurian legends in *Idylls of the King*, completed in 1885, wrote narrative poems such as *Enoch Arden*, and historical dramas such as *Becket*. His later works are ballads, lyrics, tales in dialect, and classical pieces.

**HARRY S. TRUMAN** (1884- ) was born in Lamar, Missouri, the son of a farmer. He worked in a bank, on a railroad, and on a farm until World War I, which he entered as a captain in the field artillery and from which he returned as a major. He still holds a colonel's commission in the Army Reserve Corps. After the war he was an administrative county judge, then a presiding judge, 1926-34, when he became U. S. Senator from Missouri. In the Senate, after 1941, his most important work was with the Truman Investigating Committee, the "watchdog of the war effort." He was elected Vice President in 1944 and succeeded to the Presidency upon the death of Franklin D. Roosevelt in April, 1945.

**JAMES THURBER** (1894- ) was born in Columbus, Ohio, and educated at Ohio State University. For a time he was a reporter and writer on the Paris edition of the *Chicago Tribune*. He returned to New York in 1926, and began contributing humorous sketches, stories and drawings to *The New Yorker*.

## Appendices

His books include *The Owl in the Attic and Other Perplexities*, 1931, *My Life and Hard Times*, 1933, *My World—and Welcome to It*, 1942, and *The Thurber Carnival*, 1945.

SUMNER WELLES (1892- ) was born in New York City. He entered diplomatic service in 1915, and, after two years as secretary at the embassy in Tokyo, began a long service in Inter-American affairs. He was chief of Latin American Affairs Division, Department of State, 1921-1922, and delegate and representative for the United States at many Inter-American conferences since. Appointed Assistant Secretary of State in 1933, he became Under Secretary in 1937, and resigned in 1943. He is author of *Naboth's Vineyard*, 1928, and *The Time for Decision*, 1944.

GENE WELTFISH (1902- ) studied at Barnard College, Columbia University. She has been an instructor in the Department of Anthropology at Columbia since 1936.

THOMAS WOLFE (1900-1938) was born in Asheville, North Carolina. He graduated from the University of North Carolina in 1920, went on to Harvard, and after receiving his M.A. there was appointed instructor in English at Washington Square College, New York University. During the next six years he taught, traveled in Europe and worked at his writing. "A man must use the material and experience of his own life," he said, "if he is to create anything that has substantial value." The editor, Maxwell Perkins, helped him put his writing in publishable form, and in 1929 *Look Homeward, Angel* appeared. Its success was immediate. Among his other books are *Of Time and the River*, 1935, *From Death to Morning*, 1935, *The Story of a Novel*, 1936, and *You Can't Go Home Again*, 1940.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH (1770-1850) received his bachelor's degree at Cambridge in 1791. He traveled in France thereafter, was excited by the French revolutionary spirit,

and fell in love with "Annette" Vallon, who bore him a daughter in 1792. His first works were published in 1793. After the receipt of a legacy, he joined with Samuel Taylor Coleridge to write *Lyrical Ballads*, a collection of poems with a preface, both parts representing a revolt against the conventions of eighteenth century poetry and a belief in the observation of experience. He lived in Germany in 1798-1799 but finally settled in the Lake district of England, working on *The Prelude*, his long autobiographical poem, which underwent many changes before it was published posthumously. During his later years he became an opponent of the liberal ideas of his early life, was made Poet Laureate in 1843, and published continuously.

RICHARD WRIGHT (1908- ) was born on a plantation near Natchez, Mississippi. His father deserted his mother when he was five, and thereafter he led an insecure and turbulent existence for a number of years. As he matured, his interests gradually emerged as social, political and literary. He worked on the Federal Writers' Project in both Chicago and New York, and in 1939 was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship. In eight months, in Brooklyn, he wrote *Native Son*. In 1940 he was awarded the Spingarn Medal, the highest award for achievement in the field of Negro interests. In accepting it, he said: "I accept in the name of the stalwart, enduring millions of Negroes whose fate and destiny I have sought to depict in terms of scene and narrative in imaginative fiction. It cannot be otherwise, for they are my people, and my writing—which is my life and which carries my convictions—attempts to mirror their struggles for freedom during these troubled days." *Black Boy* was published in 1945.

PHILIP WYLIE (1902- ) was born in Massachusetts. He studied at Princeton University. He was a member of the staff of *The New Yorker*, 1925-1927, has written for motion pictures, been a lecturer and radio

### *Biographical Notes*

speaker, and a contributor to many magazines. Among his books are *Finnley Wren*, 1934, *Generation of Vipers*, 1942, and *Night Unto Night*, 1944.

WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS (1865-1939) was born in Dublin. He first studied art, then

turned to writing. He worked to encourage an Irish literary renaissance. For four years he was a Senator of the Irish Free State. He was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1923. His books include *Collected Poems*, 1933, *Collected Plays*, 1934, and *Last Poems and Plays*, 1940.

# **Sardar Dyal Singh Public Library,**

**NEW DELHI**

**DATE LOANED**

**This book may be kept for**

**Fourteen days**

**A fine of .06 nP. will be charged for each  
day the book is kept over-time.**

--	--	--	--

**Sardar Dyal Singh Public Library,**  
**NEW DELHI.**

1. Books may be retained for a period not exceeding 14 days.
2. Books may be renewed on request if they are not required by some other member of the Library.
3. Dog-earing the pages of a book; marking or writing therein with ink or pencil; tearing or taking out pages or otherwise damaging it will constitute an injury to a book.
4. Borrower's will be required to pay full price of any book lost or damaged by them.

**HELP TO KEEP THE BOOK NEAT AND CLEAN**

**S.L.S.**